



CONDITIONS OF U.P. C. 1881-1889 LORD DUFFEREN'S REPORT

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Award of the Degree of

Master of Philosophy

IN
HISTORY

By

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "**Condition of U.P.c. 1881-1889: Lord Dufferen's Report**" is the original work of **Ms. Nikhat Perween** completed under my supervision. The dissertation is suitable for submission and award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy in History**.

Jawaid Akhtar
(Dr. Jawaid Akhtar)
Supervisor

*Dedicated
To
My Parents*

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Nikhāt Parveen
(NIKHAT PARVEEN)

ABBREVIATIONS

CPIATNWPO	<i>A Collection of Papers Connected with an Inquiry into The Condition of the Lower classes of the Population, Especially In Agricultural Tracts, In the North Western Provinces and Oudh, Instituted In 1887-1888.</i>
C. No.	Circular Number
IGI	<i>Imperial Gazetteer of India</i>
IGUP	<i>Imperial Gazetteer of United Provinces</i>
NWP	North Western Provinces
UPDG	<i>Uttar Pradesh District Gazetteer</i>
RIFC	<i>Report of Indian famine commission</i>

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- Appendix-III. North Western Provinces and Oudh, Staple Crops.

INTRODUCTION

At the time of the Enquiry Report of 1888 North Western Provinces and Oudh were also within the geographical entity of Uttar Pradesh. Earlier this province was known as United Agra and Oudh and the administration were in the hand of the Lieutenant of Agra and Oudh.

The presidency of Agra was formed in 1834 and in 1836 the name of the province was changed to the North Western Provinces under the Lieutenant Governorship. When in 1856 the Province of Oudh annexed, these two provinces were brought together in 1877. Consequently, the union of these two states formed a new province namely United Provinces in 1902 and after independence it became Uttar Pradesh.

The papers related to the Enquiry of 1888 which is popularly known as Dufferin Report are the most valuable source which contains statistical information related to the economic conditions and the standard of living of the poorer section of agriculturists in India during the latter half of the nineteenth century. These papers also provide us first hand information about the contemporary economy and society of rural India. The Enquiry was conducted throughout the country by the local officers on the order of the Lord Dufferin, the then viceroy of India. The Governor General's main intention behind this enquiry was that he wanted to know the truth: why did the greater proportions of the population of India suffer from a daily insufficiency of food? Further, he

wanted to know the actual conditions of the lower classes of population especially in agricultural region.

The United Provinces' government like other provincial government was asked to conduct the enquiry in a confidential manner and to ensure that the enquiry should have kept a close secret from the people. But the concealment could not have maintained as some of the papers of the enquiry secured by William Digby from the parliament Library in London through the good officers of Mr. Bradlaugh who was a Member of Parliament at that time. Mr. Digby made such an effective use of these papers in writing his book entitled *Prosperous British India (1901)*. Hence, the publication of Digby's book made its confidentiality unworthy. Finally, the Secretary of State proposed to the Government of India that these papers might have been published. *Imperial Gazetteers, District Gazetteers, Famine Commission Report* etc are important primary sources for this purpose

Agrarian Condition in Northern India: the United Provinces under British Rule 1860-1900, written by Elizabeth Whitcombe in 1972 gives us detailed information about the crops and cropping pattern, land revenue settlements, and indebtedness etc. This book also makes us know that the condition of the lower section of the population was very miserable in reality.

Another important book authored by B.M. Bhatia under the title, *Famine in India* in 1863 is one of the most useful sources for our study. In his book he has tried to show that how introduction of railways changed the course

of famine. His article, *An Enquiry into the conditions of the agricultural classes in India*, 1888 contains noteworthy information especially related to the present work. This article is based on the enquiry report of 1888.

Besides this important Report and these valuable books I have gone through so many other books as well which have proved handy. For example, we can cite R.C. Dutt's *Famine and Land Assessment in India* (1985) and Prof. Irfan Habib's book *Indian Economy, 1858-1914* (2007).

First chapter deals with the history of the origin of North Western Provinces and Oudh which included major parts of 'ceded' and 'conquered' provinces. It also evaluates the nature of crops and cropping pattern of North Western Provinces and Oudh. The major crops of the provinces were maize, rice, wheat, barley, sugarcane, cotton etc. The cropping patterns adopted by the cultivators of the provinces were crop mixing and rotation of crops.

Second chapter deals with the lower section of the societies who were the subject of the Enquiry and roughly divided into four classes on the basis of their land holdings: cultivators who had more than five acres of land, secondly, cultivators who had small field or less than five acre, thirdly, labourers classes and finally were the artisans.

Third chapter deals with conditions of the lower classes of population and an attempt had been made to show the various reasons which were responsible for their poor condition. Their conditions have been discussed on the basis of several cases mentioned in Enquiry report of 1888.

In the Fourth chapter we have tried to show the various causes of the famines besides natural dearth, for instance, export of food grain, British land revenue policy etc. The chapter analyses the relief policies which were adopted by the British government in the form of gratuitous relief, private charity, remission and suspensions of revenue etc.

In fifth chapter an attempt has been made to highlight the major consequences of the famines particularly in the region of North Western Provinces and Oudh. These consequences were the rise in price, insufficiency of food and indebtedness etc. This conclusion has been drawn on the basis of Enquiry report. Most importantly, an attempt has also been formulated to correlate the consequences of famine with the conditions of the lower classes of population.

CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND OF NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES AND OUDH: ITS CROPS AND CROPIING PATTERN

The presidency of Agra was first formed in 1834, up till then the area was separated had been included in the presidency of Bengal sometimes called as the western provinces. In 1836 its name was changed to the lieutenant governorship of the NWP. The province of Oudh was annexed in 1856 and became a chief commissionership with a separate administration. In 1877 the two provinces were brought together under the lieutenant governor of NWP and chief commissioner of Oudh. In 1902 the name was again changed from NWP to United Provinces.¹

NWP and Oudh, earlier known as United Agra and Oudh and administered by the lieutenant of Agra and Oudh. It lies between 23° 52' and 31° 18' and 84° 39' E. The provinces were bounded on the north by Tibet, and on the north-east by Nepal. On the east and south-east by Champaran, Saran, Shahabad, and Plamau district of Bengal. On the south by two Chotanagpur states and on the west by the states of Gwalior, Dholpur, and Bharatpur, the districts of Gurgaon, Delhi, Karnal, Ambala in the Punjab, and the states of Sirmur and Jubbal. The Jumna River forms

¹ *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, Vol. I, Usha Jain, New Delhi, 1984, pp. 1-2; See Appendix I.

part of the western boundary. The Ganges part of the southern and the Gandak part of the eastern boundary, besides these, all boundaries are artificial.²

The geographical status of the districts of North-Western Provinces are mentioned in the Imperial Gazetteer of United Provinces in the following way, that the border of Bareilly and Pilibhit lie on the Tarai and Kheri, Bahraich, Gonda, Basti and Gorakhpur run up to the Nepal frontier. The whole of this tract is a sloping plain lying practically free from the Himalayan system though low hills are found to the north of Bahraich and Gonda.³ More than half of the provinces are included in the great Indo-Gangetic plain. The western portion comprises of thirteen districts: Muzaffarnagar, Meerut, Bulandshahr, Aligarh, Muttra, Agra, Farukhabad, Mainpuri, Etawah, Etah, Badaun, Moradabad and Shahjahanpur. Most of these are situated entirely in the *Doab*, or the space between the two rivers Ganges and Jumna, but Muttra, Agra, and Etawah also extend to the south and west of the Jumna and the latter three lie to the north and east of the Ganges, with the exception of Muttra and Agra, these districts form gently sloping plain of alluvial soil. In the west of Muttra and Agra low stone ridges and hillocks form a feature of the landscape. This portion of the provinces is by far the most prosperous. Ten out of thirteen districts are protected by canals. And the center of the great plain lie the districts of Kanpur, Fatehpur, and Allahabad along with nine

² Ibid., Vol. I, p. 1.

³ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 3.

of the Oudh districts, namely: Lucknow, Unao, Rai Bareli, Sitapur, Hardoi, Faizabad, Sultanpur, Partahgarh, and Barabanki. All the Oudh districts lie between the Ganges and the Gogra. While Kanpur, Fatehpur and part of Allahabad are in the *doab*. Allahabad also extends to the north of the Ganges and south of the Jumna. The eastern portion of the great plain includes Ballia, Jaunpur, Azamgarh, Benaras and Ghazipur. All lying between Gogra and the Ghazipur. The last two districts extending to south of the Ganges.⁴

However, the present NWP consisted major parts of the ceded and conquered provinces. Warren Hasting annexed Benaras and some adjoining districts in 1775. On the death of Nawab of Oudh by a treaty, concluded with his successor (Sadat Ali), Allahabad and some neighbouring districts were ceded in 1801, under the pressure from Lord Wellesely and were called as ceded provinces.⁵ It roughly consisted present Gorakhpur and Rohilkhand divisions with the district of Allahabad, Fatehpur, Kanpur, Etawah, Mainpuri, Etah, south of Mirzapur, and the Tarai *parganas* of Kumaun divisions.⁶ Delhi and Agra and the basin of the Ganges were conquered from the Marathas in 1803, during the administration of Lord Wellesly and were called as conquered provinces⁷ which consisted the Meerut division, the rest of the Agra division and the district around

⁴ Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 3-4.

⁵ R.C. Dutt., *Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1904, p. 33 (reprint 1985).

⁶ IGI, United Provinces, I, op. cit., p. 30.

⁷ R.C. Dutt., *Victorian Age*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 30.

Delhi(now in Punjab), most of the present districts of Banda, and Hamirpur and small tracts of Jalaun, Gohad and Gawalior. The two last were restored to the Sindhia in 1805.⁸

There were forty-eight British Districts, thirty six being in the province of Agra and twelve in Oudh. Each district was in charge of a district officer, who was Collector and Magistrate in the province of Agra and deputy commissioner and Magistrate in the Kumaun Division and in Oudh. The districts were grouped together in Divisions, each under a commissioner, to whom the district officers were subordinate. There were nine Divisions and the numbers of districts in a Division varied from three (Gorakhpur, and Kumaun) to five (Benaras), six (Meerut, Agra, Bareilly, Lucknow and Faizabad) or seven (Allahabad). The most important sub-division of a District was the *tehsil*. Each *tehsil* was in charge of a *tahsildar*, who was primarily responsible for the collection of revenue. *Tehsil* were divided into *parganah*. Subordinate to the *tehsildar* were the supervisor (*Kanungos*), who supervised the work of the *Patwaris* or village accountants, and checked their papers, besides performing miscellaneous functions.⁹

⁸ IGI, United Provinces, I, op .cit , pp. 30-31.

⁹ Ibid., I, op. cit., pp. 100-01.

CROPS AND CROPPING PATTERN

The main staple food-grains of India are rice, wheat, gram, barley, *jowar*, *bajra* and maize etc.¹⁰ Major crops of NWP and Oudh can be divided into three groups, (a) *Kharif* Crops which are sown from June to August b) *Rabi* Crops which are sown mainly in October and November and (c) those which are not sown in either of these seasons.¹¹

THE PRINCIPALE KHARIF FOOD CROPS:

MAIZE (*Makka or Makai*): It is also called as *bari juar* in the parts of Oudh.¹² It is one of the earliest rains crop and is never irrigated after the rains, except at the times of actual drought and manure is usually applied. It is generally followed by a winter crop in the same year.¹³ It is found in most part of the provinces, but, it is common in the Meerut and Faizabad divisions. It is almost unknown in the black soil track of Bundelkhand.¹⁴

RICE: It is grown during the rains and at places where, there are a good chance of getting enough water. Thus, it is the principal crop in the division of Faizabad, Gorakhpur and Benares. On the other hand it is almost unknown in the dry

¹⁰ *Royal commission on Agriculture in India, Abridge Report*, Agricole Publishing Academy, Bombay, 1928, pp. 69-70 (reprint 1983).

¹¹ W.H. Moreland., *The Agriculture of United Provinces*, N.M., 1912 p. 176. [1st Edition]

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 178.

¹³ *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. xxiv, Today and Tomorrow's Printers and Publishers, New Delhi, pp. 287-88.

¹⁴ W.H. Moreland., *op. cit.*, pp. 180-81.

districts of Muttra and Agra as well as in large parts of Bundelkhand.¹⁵ The crop is grown year after year on the same land but a water pulse is frequently grown in the interval between two rice crops. There are many varieties but the principle distinction is between those sown broad-cast and those transplanted, the latter being the finer kind. It is sown in June and July and harvested from August to December.¹⁶

MILLETS: There are two types of millet (a) *Juar* and *Bajra*, which are tall plants growing from six feet to eight or more and (b) the small millets, which are *Mandua*, *Kodan*, *Sawan* and *Kakun*..

JOWAR: It is a common *kharif* crop in almost all the places, where rice is not staple. It is sown in July (*Asarh*) as soon as the earliest sowing (cotton, maize) have been finished. As a rule it is grown in isolation but sometimes is mixed with *arhar*, and some of the small pulses, but it grows much faster than these crops and soon become a the predominant feature in the field. In Meerut division it is sown only for fodder.¹⁷

BAJRA: It occupies the same place in rotation as *juar*, but it is generally grown on the lighter soils and is requires manure less frequently.¹⁸ It is most commonly

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 183.

¹⁶ IGI., Vol., xxiv, op. cit., p. 179.

¹⁷ Ibid., Vol. xxiv, PP 180-85; Moreland, op. cit., pp. 184-85.

¹⁸ Ibid.

grown in Agra and Rohilkhand divisions and is very rare in the east of the provinces.¹⁹

Mandua is small millet. It is also called as *makra* and is a big staple in the hills but not in the plains though grown in many places. It is common in Oudh and eastern districts. It requires light soils and is sown as early as possible. Sometimes, it is sown in nurseries and transplanted in the same way as rice.²⁰

KODON: It is grown only where the land is poor, and is eaten by those who can get nothing better. The crop is common in Bundelkhand on the higher fields and in the upland tract of Mirzapur in Oudh. It is frequently grown mixed with rice in the poorer fields.²¹

SAWAN: Its grain is perhaps more popular for religious use than for food. It is common in some parts of Rohilkhand and in Bundelkhand and the eastern districts. It is sown as soon as the rains break, sometimes in fact earlier and does best on light soils.²²

PULSES: The autumn pulses are *arhar*, *urd* (mash), *mung*, *moth*, and *lobia*. Among them *arhar* is the most important subsidiary food crop, which is almost sown mixed not only with *jowar* and *bajra* but also with cotton. It is sown when the rains break, and when the earlier crops have been removed. *Arhar* alone

¹⁹ W.H.Moreland., op. cit., p. 187.

²⁰ IGI, Vol. xxiv, op. cit., p.183.

²¹ W.H.Moreland., op. cit., pp. 187-88.

²² Ibid., p. 189.

occupied the field till the end of April and has special importance in rotation, due to its value as a 'host plant' for the nitrogen fixing micro-organism. The cropping pulses *mung*, *urd* (mash), *moth*, *lobia* are as a rule grown with *jowar* and *bajra*; *urd* and *moth* are also sown alone, the former on better and the latter on poorer soils. These pulses are never irrigated and rarely manured.²³

THE PRINCIPAL NON-FOOD KHARIF CROPS:

TIL: It is one of the chief sources of oil used extensively by the people. It is commonly sown along with *jowar*, *bajra* and cotton, sometimes broadcasted along with the other crops, and sometime sown separately in lines and especially round the borders of the fields. It is grown very largely in Bundelkhand.²⁴

CASTOR (AREND OF RENDI): It is most commonly grown as a sort of hedge to field crops, sometimes also on banks along the roads and paths. It is use for lightening and to a less extent for oiling cart-wheels and the other simple machinery in use among the people.²⁵

GROUNDNUTS: It is sown in May with irrigation. There are two main types; one has large nuts and is called *Mungphala*, the other has small nuts and called as *Mungphali*. The former type appears best in the provinces.²⁶

²³ IGI., Vol. xxiv, op. cit., p.181.

²⁴ W.H. Moreland., op .cit., pp. 194-95.

²⁵ Ibid., p 196

²⁶ Ibid., p. 197.

COTTON: It is the most important fiber in the provinces. It is grown as a rains crop, usually without irrigation but where canal water is available; it is sown with irrigation before the monsoon breaks. It is grown after a winter crop and is generally manured.²⁷ It is grown mainly in the west of the provinces, where the rainfall is less than the east. It is also very extensively grown in Bundelkhand, but is rare in most of Oudh and in the eastern districts where, the rainfall is very heavy.²⁸

HEMP OR SAN: It is grown at the border of other rains crops. It is not manured or irrigated.²⁹

ROSELL HEMP: It is grown almost at the border of other rains crops, it gives a softer, but weaker fiber than the first named plant. Its best quality comes from Meerut and from the north of Oudh.³⁰

THE PRINCIPAL *RABI* FOOD CROPS:

WHEAT: It is grown in winter, usually after a rain crop in the preceding years. So, the land lies fallow for about eleven months or for six months, if the previous crop included *Arhar*. It is frequently but not always manured with cow dung and house refuse, and is irrigated in the greater part of the provinces. It is sown at the

²⁷ IGL., Vol. xxiv, op.cit., p. 182.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 181; W.H. Moreland., op. cit., p. 200.

³⁰ W.H. Moreland., op. cit., p. 201.

end of the October or the beginning of November (*Kartik*) and harvested in March and April (*Phagun-chait*).³¹ The best wheat comes from the western districts, especially Meerut and Muzafarnagar and the quality on the whole decreases as one goes east.³² The soft white wheat is usually called as *dudia*, red wheat is *lallia*, while beardless wheat are *mundia*. In Bundelkhand where most of the wheat is red, the term *pisssi* is usually applied to soft and *kathia* to hard wheat.³³

BARLEY (*Jau*): It is usually grown with peas and gram, and occasionally with wheat, when it grows alone or mixed with wheat, the rotation is commonly the same as of the pulses. It frequently follows a rain crop grown in the same year. It is not as a rule manured and often grown on unirrigated land, when irrigated as a rule, it gets only one or two watering.³⁴ It is most commonly grown in the Benares division and least in the wheat growing district in the west.³⁵

GRAM (*Chana*): It is the principal *rabi* crop of all parts of the provinces. There are several varieties of its, different mostly in the size and colour of the grain, one of those known as *cabuli*, has large white seed.³⁶ It is grown in winter, either alone or mixed with barley. It frequently follows rice or an early autumn crop in the

³¹ IGI. Vol. xxiv, op. cit., p. 180; See Appendix II, III.

³² W.H. Moreland., op. cit., pp. 201-04.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ IGI., Vol. xxiv, op. cit., p. 180.

³⁵ W.H. Moreland., op. cit., p. 205.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 206.

same year. It is sown as a rule without manure and irrigation but canal water is applied once or even twice in the western districts.³⁷

The *rabi* pulses besides gram are peas, *masur* and *khisari*, peas is grown mainly in the districts east of Allahabad.³⁸ *Masur* or lentil is mainly grown in the damper parts of the provinces, usually after autumn rice.³⁹ It is found most commonly in the Tarai and sub-mountain tracts. *Khesari* is the lowest among all the *rabi* pulses. It is grown in the eastern districts and parts of Bundelkhand.⁴⁰

NON-FOOD *RABI* CROPS:

Rape or mustard (*sarson*), line seed (*alsi*) and *duan* are the three oil seeds, which are grown as *rabi* crop.⁴¹

OPIUM (Poppy): It is grown as a winter crop with high cultivation, usually after maize or some other early rains crop. The land is heavily manured with cow dung and irrigation is almost universal.

TOBACCO: It is grown around most village sites, it flourished in highly ammoniated soil and mostly consumed locally.⁴² There are two species of tobacco grown in the province. The commonest is *Nicotiana Tavadum* or *desi tambaku* and

³⁷ IGI., Vol. xxiv, op. cit., p. 180.

³⁸ W.H.Moreland., op. cit., p. 208.

³⁹ IGI., Vol. xxiv, op. cit., p. 181.

⁴⁰ W.H.Moreland., op. cit., p. 209.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 210-13; IGI., Vol. xxiv, op. cit., p. 182.

⁴² IGI., Vol. xxiv, op. cit., p. 183.

the other is *Nicotiana Rustica* or *Culcuttia tambaku*. The plant need a great quantity of water, and irrigation may have to be done as often as once a fortnight.⁴³

SAFFLOWER (*Kusum/Barre*): It is grown in Meerut and also in Benares. The flowers are gathered for the sake of dye, that is made out of them, of a beautiful pink colour.⁴⁴

THE PRINCIPAL CROPS SOWN AT SPECIAL SEASONS:

SUGARCANE: It is grown all over the provinces except in Bundelkhand. The principal cane tracts are (a) the country from Saharanpur to Bundelkhand (b) the Rohilkhand division (especially Bijnor) (c) The eastern districts and the adjoining parts of south-east Oudh, and (d) Gorakhpur. The time for planting varies in the west, it runs from January to March, that is before *rabi* is harvested, while in the east it is more usually planted when the *rabi* harvest is over, that is to say March to April (*Chait*).⁴⁵ There are three main varieties of sugarcane (a) *Ukh*, (b) *Ganna* and (c) *Paunda* canes. The first are thin hard canes used only for sugar manufacture the third are thin soft canes used mainly for chewing, while the *ganna* canes are used chiefly for sugar manufacture but partly also for chewing. The crop

⁴³ W.H.Moreland., op. cit., p. 215.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 216.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

occupies the land for period varying from twelve to eighteen or twenty four months.⁴⁶

MELONS: Various kinds of melons are grown in the hot weather. The ordinary melon is known as *kharbuza*, while the water-melon is called *tarbuza*. Many of them are grown in small patches of highly manured land, where they can be constantly watered.⁴⁷

SINGHARA: This is a water plant, grown in tanks and ponds with its roots in the soil. As a rule the crop is confined to small tanks and water holes, but occasionally it is seen covering a large area in a *jhil*.⁴⁸

CARROTS (*Gajar*): The seed is usually sown in September, and in spite of a large field, odd corners of land and the waster patches near a well are most commonly used.⁴⁹

RADISH (*Muli*): Its seed is sown in August or September and the roots are ready for digging by October or a little later according to season.⁵⁰

INDIGO (*Nil*): Its cultivation has rapidly declined. It is sown either in the spring or at the commencement of the rains. In the former case it is ready for cutting in August and in the latter case a month later.⁵¹

⁴⁶ IGI., Vol. xxiv, op. cit., p. 183.

⁴⁷ W.H. Moreland., op. cit., p. 220; IGI., Vol. xxiv, op. cit., p. 183.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 221.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 222.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid; IGI., Vol. xxiv, op. cit., p. 183.

CROPPING PATTERNS:

There are various methods which have been adopted by the cultivators with the object to secure better for his family and his cattle. They have enough food to sell, to pay his rent and meet other cash expenses of the household. The methods are as follows.

MIXED CROPPING: The practice of mixing crop in a plot is very common in NWP. It provides security against the fluctuations of season if one crop fails, then other will probably stand and cover the ground.⁵² For example, in Oudh, large areas are sown with rice and the small millets known as *kodon*, if the season is wet rice flourishes and if dry, then the *kodon* so was that, in either cases the cultivator has a chance of getting something. A similar case is the mixture of coarse rice with *juar* rare on high land but frequent in some river valleys. In this case, if the river comes down in flood, the *juar* is spoilt but the rice is good, and if there are no floods, then rice is poor but the *juar* is good.⁵³ It not only provides additional harvest in the same field by increasing overall yield but also ensures optimum utilization of the land, the nutrients and other agricultural inputs. The leguminous crops like *moong* and *juar* with other cereal crops help in providing nitrogen to the soil and through it, to the standing crops. For this reason *arhar* is mostly mixed with gram, peas or mustard, barley with gram and peas, maize with *urd*, and cotton

⁵²J.A. Voelcker., *Report on the Improvement of Indian Agriculture*, New Delhi, 1983, pp. 233-35.

⁵³ W.H.Moreland., op. cit., p. 134.

with *urd*.⁵⁴ The common crops which afford homes for the bacteria, which produced combined nitrogen, are in the *kharif-arhar*, *urd*, *mung*, moth, indigo, hemp and in *rabi-gram*, peas, *masur*.⁵⁵

Mixed crops are not confined to only two in number. On the ground at the same time, several sorts may be sown together for instance, with wheat, barely and gram or those with rape (*seron*) as well. When wheat and linseed occur together then linseed fringes the wheat field and thus serves to keep cattle off. As they will not touch the growing linseed. Besides this, it also covers the land, and prevents bareness and the consequent loss of the soil, which would result from the sun beating down upon it and from the loss of moisture.⁵⁶

Yet another advantage of the pattern, is to be found in the different habits of the roots of the different plants; some plants are deep rooted and draw most of their food from some way below the surface, while other have spreading roots, which feed at different depths both can thrive without interfering with each other, and the total produce of the land will be increased. This is particularly the case with a mixture of *juar* and *arhar*, as the roots of the latter crop are much deeper than those of the former.⁵⁷

⁵⁴J.A. Voelcke.r, op. cit., p.233; *Uttar Pradesh District Gazetteer, Aligarh*, ed., Balwant Singh, Lucknow, 1981, p. 83.

⁵⁵ W.H.Moreland., op. cit., p. 135.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 134.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 135.

CROP ROTATION: Where a definite order of cropping is followed on a particular bit of land, this part of agriculture known as rotation of crops.⁵⁸ However the common practice of mixing crop in one plot does not merely reduce the risk, it also provides a means of crop rotation, which permits the soil to be cultivated constantly without being overburdened.⁵⁹

The common rotation is easily found in the medium lands, which are suitable either for *kharif* or *rabi*. In the case of these lands the following rules are followed in the greater part of the provinces. (a) a field should bear a *kharif* crop in one year and a *rabi* crop in the next (b) either the *kharif* or *rabi* crop should wholly or partially be pulse, so that a crop of pulse is grown at least once in two years. Thus, a field may, in first year bear *juar*, *arhar*, *urd* and in the second year wheat, in the third year it will again bear a *kharif* crop which may be before *juar*, *arhar*, *urad* or some variant such as cotton, *arhar*, or perhaps, *juar* alone, in the last case it would not be considered proper in ordinary cases to grow wheat in the fourth year, wheat gram or gram-barley would be preferred.⁶⁰

The main advantages of the rotation are the maintenance of the supply of food. In other aspect rotation is of great importance in controlling insects, pests and fungous disease. If the same crop is sown in the following year, the pest and

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 136.

⁵⁹ Elizabeth Whitcombe., *Agrarian Condition in Northern India: United Provinces Under British Rule (1860-1900)*, New Delhi, 1971, p. 27.

⁶⁰ W.H. Moreland., op. cit., p. 136.

disease find favourable conditions for spreading while if a different crop is sown the conditions are unfavourable for them.⁶¹

Conclusively, NWP was formed in 1836, which consisted major parts of 'ceded' and 'conquered' provinces. The province of Oudh was annexed in 1856 and the two provinces were brought together under the Lieutenant Governor of Oudh in 1877. The name was again changed from North-Western Provinces to United Provinces in 1902. The valuable rivers of the provinces are Ganga, Jamuna, and Gogra etc. The major crops of the provinces can be categories into three sections (a) *Kharif* are rice, *Juar*, *bajra*, *mandua*, *kodan*, *sawan*, *kakun*, various pulses i.e., *arhar*, *urd*, *mung*, *lobia*, *til* and castor as oil seeds and cotton etc. (b) *Rabi* are wheat, barley, various pulses i.e., gram, peas, *masur*, *khisari* etc. (c) opium, tobacco, sugarcane, melons, radish, carrots, and indigo etc. were sown at special season .Mixed cropping and crop rotation are the important methods which have been adopted by the cultivator with the object to secure better for his family and his cattle.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 138.

CHAPTER II

LOWER CLASSES OF POPULATION: ON THE BASIS OF ENQUIRY REPORT

The classes forming the subject of enquiry may be divided into four (i) the cultivators, having rights of occupancy in the land or a holding exceeding five acres (ii) the cultivators who had no such rights or who hold a small area (iii) the agricultural day labourers and (iv) the artisans. The landholder's class has been practically excluded from the limits of the enquiry because they were in a better condition and easily got sufficient food.¹

Of the total of 15,000,000 (exclusive, according to the method of census of 1881, of children dependent on their parents, and women employed merely in the domestic work of their families) the individuals which were actually occupied with agriculture are estimated. The numbers of landholders are in round numbers of 1, 200,000 tenants at 10,500,000, agricultural labourers at 3,250,000.² The artisans of village, as distinguished from the town artisans, are estimated at

¹ *A Collection of Papers Connected with An Inquiry into The Condition of the Lower Classes of the Population, Especially in Agricultural Tracts, in the North Western Provinces and Oudh, Instituted in 1887-1888.* (hereafter CPIATNWPO), From - Chief Secretary to Government, NWP and Oudh, To - Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Department, No. 1191S/1-16, dated Naini Tal, 15th August, 1888, p. 8.

² Ibid.

3,482,207.³ The proportion of the village artisans to the agricultural class can not be accurately stated, because the census of 1881 includes only women and children. But it did not probably exceed 8% of the combined agricultural and village artisan class.⁴ There were no immediate means to distinguish between relative numbers of cultivators more or less than 5 acres of land. The agricultural day-labourers forms about 18% of the classes living immediately on the land. However, the most numerous class was the cultivator class which was chosen for enquiry.

Taking first the cultivators of the former class, who according to Mr. Crooke, Collector of Etah, were among the better class, assuming evidently that, like the cultivating proprietor, they had raised above want, i.e., Baksha, cultivates 7 acres and has a family of five, he being the only adult male and have the sufficient food.⁵

Mr. Cadell, from the Muttra district gives an example of this class, Naubat is a *Jat* cultivator; holds some seven or eight acres of land, and supports his wife and a mother-in-law. In ordinary seasons his family eats three times a day but in November and December 1887, their meals are reduced to two; in January and

³ CPIATNWPO., Appendix XII, pp. 35,73

⁴ CPIATNWPO., No. 1191S/1-16, dated Naini Tal, 15th August, 1888, op. cit., p.-8

⁵ CPIATNWPO., From – A. Cadell, To – Commissioner, Agra Division, No. 1006/III, dated Muttra the 1st May 1888, *Tahsil Jalesar, Mauza Mohanpur*, p. 71

February 1888, they could not afford to have more than one meal a day.⁶ Mr. Alexander, collector of Etawah, has taken certain examples, one of them is the family of Bejai (shepherd). Alexander says about him that he cultivates nine and a quarter acres of land. He has a family of seven, two of whom are children. Last winter they were reduced to absolute want of foods for the greater part of January and February; they did not get regular meals, and lived on carrots and edible wild plants (such as Bathua).⁷ Mr. Alexander says that this is the exceptional example of worst case.⁸ Mr. Horderness of Pilibhit district reported that taking the tenants of the first class, those who hold above five acres; all were found by him to be in prosperous circumstances, and absolutely above want of food. He gives the following illustration; Badalu (Lodha) cultivates 20 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres, his family consisting himself, two women, four boys, and a girl. They were above the want of any food.⁹

The second class of tenant who cultivates five or less than five acres. Mr. Rose says that this class is unfortunately numerous, but even in this, there was extreme stage of agricultural poverty. Because of the bad seasons they suffered

⁶ Ibid., pp. 44-45

⁷ CPIATNWPO., From – E.B. Alexander, To – Commissioner, Agra Division, dated Etawah, the 15th May 1888, pp. 139-143.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ CPIATNWPO., From – T. W. Holderness, To Commissioner, Rohilkhand Division, No. 758/XII – 162, dated Pilibhit, the 13th April 1888, p. 147

from insufficiency of food.¹⁰ Similar opinion has been given by Major Anson, who had the charge of Balrampur estates.¹¹ As Mr. Crooke gives example of this class from Etah; Faiz Ali has a family of four, he being the only adult male; all were apparently sufficiently fed.¹² An example of similar class has also given by Mr. Alexander, collector of Etawah that Munnay (*Ahir*) has no family except a wife. He tided over last winter by the sale of a vegetable crop and a bullock, but had a very hard time of it and undoubtedly towards the end of the year suffered from want of food.¹³

Next class is the labourer class; agricultural labourer was a growing category among the rural population in the 19th century. Artisans were also consisted in rural society along with landowners, traders, money lenders and farmers. Since Plassey (1757) de-industrialization started and old towns like Lucknow decayed. In such circumstances it may be possible that the artisans were engaged as labourer on low wages.¹⁴ It was stated by Munro in 1845 that there were no landless peasants in India. But we can see that in early nineteenth century

¹⁰ CPIATNWPO., NO. 1191 S/1-16, dated Naini Tal, the 15th August 1888, op. cit., p. 14

¹¹ CPIATNWPO., From – Major G.W. Anson, To- Commissioner, Fyzabad Division, Dated the 14th June, 1888, p. 143.[Enclosure to Director of Land Records and Agriculture's Letter, No. 90A, dated 3rd July 1888]

¹² CPIATNWPO., Agra Division, Etah districti, No. 585/1-18, of the 12th January 1888, op.cit., Pakir of Pinjari, pp. 121-2

¹³ CPIATNWPO., From – E.B. Alexander, To Commissioner, Agra Division, Dated Etawah, the 15th May 1888, p. 141

¹⁴ Sunil Sen., *Agrarian Relation in India (1793-1947)*, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 33-34

agricultural labourer was a recognizable category in U.P. There were some higher castes among the Hindus and Muslims, who would not touch the plough and the *Jats, Aheers, Kurmis* etc. worked as labourers and were paid in cash as well as in grain.¹⁵

In Enquiry report various types of labourers were the subject of enquiry (a) field labourer (b) day labourer (c) *harwaha* (i) *mafi* (ii) and *sanwak*. As the day-labourer comes between the cultivator of one plough and the *harwaha*. Mr. Alexander, collector of Etawah notes that in early March of 1888 labourers were in good condition, which showed from their appearance. They had severely suffered from the want of food generally in winter when the prices of grains were very high.¹⁶ Mr. Rose collector of Ghazipur believed that the condition of day labourers was far better than the less prosperous section of agricultural community. A large section of day-labourers consisted of the *chamar* class, who obtained an ample livelihood.¹⁷ Mr. F. B. Mullock, collector and magistrate of Ballia also gave the same opinion in his memorandum.¹⁸ In Jhansi deputy commissioner Mr. R. G. Hardy writes that, the day labourer's (*chamar*) condition

¹⁵ Asiya Siddiq., *Agrarian Changes in Northern Indian State, Uttar Pradesh (1819 -1833)*, Oxford, 1973, p. 50

¹⁶ CPIATNWPO., Dated Etawah, the 15th May, 1888, op. cit., p. 140.

¹⁷ CPIATNWPO., From – E. Rose, To- Commissioner, Benares Division, No.dated Ghazipur, the 10th April 1888, p. 175.

¹⁸ CPIATNWPO., Memorandum by Mr. F. B. Mullock, Officiating Collector and Magistrate of Balia, pp. 177-79.

was quite well if not better, than the smaller tenants and sharers.¹⁹ The deputy commissioner of Kalpi also speaks in favourable terms about the day-labourer (*chamar* class).²⁰ Mr. Irwin says that day-labourers did not own land and were above the want of food. Some of them had cattle whose milk was consumed by them, in addition to the grain on which they ordinarily lived. Their wives were also earned money according to their capacity.²¹ However, they roughly earned from one *anna* to two *annas* a day by precarious job or who took service as a farm hand for Rs. 2 a month with one of the well-to-do cultivators. Their children and women were also contributed in their narrow income by gathering food and watching fields, or carrying loads.²² As an example has given by A. Cadell, collector of Muttra, that, Bhikari (*chamar*) has a family of five persons, two of them are adults. During the rains the household had only one regular meal a day, early in the cold weather gram leaves came to their help; the women used to

¹⁹ CPIATNWPO., From – R.G. Hardy, To- Commissioner, Jhansi Division, No. 412, dated, the 17th April, 1888, pp. 189-1991

²⁰ CPIATNWPO., From – Babu Sanwal Das, To – Deputy Commissioner Jhansi Division, Jalaun District, dated Kalpi, the 15th April 1888, pp. 194-95

²¹ CPIATNWPO., No. 1191S/1-16, dated Naini Tal, the 15th August 1888 op. cit., p. 18

²² CPIATNWPO., From – J.S. Porter, to – Commissioner, Rohilkhand Division, no 1248/xii-45, dated Shahjahanpur, the 15th May 1888, p. 144

collect *sag* (the leaf of gram) which the family took to eating, sometimes with bread, and sometimes boiled with about half the quantity of flour.²³

About the field labourer, Mr. Crooke says that their position is better than the small cultivators and there is a greater chance in the improvement of their condition in the comparison of the ordinary cultivator.²⁴ If he belongs to low caste i.e., *chamar* or *lodha*, his own labour along with his family are sufficient to work on his farm, because there is no objection for his wife to work on the field. Their wages are generally paid in grain at the current village rate, which is generally 10% cheaper than the market rate. At the time of wedding irrigation and harvesting, the demand for labour is more and highest rates were naturally given at those seasons. The rates of wages were always high for digging, manuring and other work requiring manual strength.²⁵ An example of field labourer has been given by Mr. Crooke: Parsi is an old man (64 years), his wife is suffering from asthma, and their only son died. His daughter grinds grain on wages, earning a

²³ CPIATNWPO., Agra Division, no. 1006/2II, dated Muttra, the 1st May 1888, op.cit., *Mauza Nagla Hasanpur, pargana Kosi*, p. 44

²⁴ CPIATNWPO., On the food and economic condition of the agricultural and laboring classes, in the Etah District, by William Crooke, Prepared in Accordance with the Instructions contained in Govt. No. 53S/1-16, of the 12th January 1888, p. 61

²⁵ Ibid.

small sum annually. He is now in a very poor state but does not suffer from want of food.²⁶

In Eastern Oudh, especially Gonda and Bahraich, the custom of surfage was common. *Harwahas* or ploughmen were the serfs of their employers and if they ran away as they sometimes did, these were pursued with energy and generally re-captured. There were two kinds of *harwahas*, (a) *Sanwak*- a *sanwak harwaha* generally received an advance of Rs. 50 from his employers. According to local usage, as his share of the produce in addition to five *maund* in every 100 or 5% as wages. The amount of the share was estimated on the division of the crops. Payment was not made, but the *thikadar* or cultivator credited it in a running account. It was always too small to afford him a sufficient food throughout the year, the deficiency had to be supplied by the employers, who debited the cost of the excess against the *harwaha* in the account. The debt consequently instead of decreasing became larger every year. There was no possible hope for the *harwaha* of paying the debt and he became lazy and careless in his work. Because he knew well that his condition cannot be improved however hard he worked.²⁷

(b) *Mafi Harwaha*- a *mafi harwaha* was more independent. The custom was that his employer gave him Rs. 8 in a year as wages, besides the usual shares of

²⁶ Ibid., *Tahsil Kasganj. Mauza Abhaipura*, Family of Parsi, pp. 88-89

²⁷ CPIATNWPO., Fyzabad Division, dated the 14th June 1888, op. cit., pp. 244-45, para-9

the produce. He was generally in a little better condition than his brother the *sanwak harwaha*, but his estate also was a very low one. He had one advantage, that he could change his employer, because he was not hopelessly bound to him by debt.²⁸

But at the same time, although the *harwaha* is a down-trodden race and was in 99 cases out of 100 helplessly embraced, but the *thikadar* were compelled to provide them sufficient food, which enabled them to work his plough efficiently, because of the fear of running off and taking service elsewhere. However, according to enquiry report their conditions were better than the slaves.²⁹

Now we come to the last class, which is the subject of the Enquiry Report, namely artisan's class. Mr. Crooke says of the artisan class, that "the wages of such people have gone up by leaps and bound since employment opened on public works". He believes that their pay became double within the last generation.³⁰ Mr. Nesfield also recorded in his monograph on caste that, artisan was an influencing caste and attracted men from other occupations. There are also few examples of artisan class as given by Mr. Crook that, Hanuman is a weaver, having a wife and baby. He has one cow, the food is apparently sufficient.³¹ Bhopal is a carpenter,

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ CPIATNWPO., No.1006/III, dated Muttra, the 1st May 1888Agra Division, op.cit., pp. 62-64

³¹ Ibid., p. 78

living on grain, green food, potatoes and so on.³² A number of examples related to artisan's class are mentioned by Mr. White, collector of Allahabad one of them is Mathaijan's family who made earthen pots for sale, his family consisted of himself and his mother ordinarily kept pigs, ate once in a day, rarely twice.³³

Other one is Bihari's family, he was an oilman, had a wife and child. He pressed oil and also cultivated. Sometimes ate once and sometimes twice a day.³⁴ Mr. Rose writes that in the time of scarcity their condition was not better and they suffered from want of food, otherwise they were above the want of food.³⁵ Mr. Mulock enquired into the circumstances of 100 households of artisans, comprising over a 1000 individuals and found that none are habitually under fed, or short of a sufficiency of food for proper nourishment.³⁶ The deputy collector of Kalpi writes similarly in favourable terms of the condition for the small artisans.³⁷

Conclusively, the classes forming the subject of enquiry can be divided into four (a) the cultivators, having rights of occupancy in the land more than five acres

³² Ibid., p.79

³³ CPIATNWPO., From – A.J.Lawrence., To – Director of Land Records and Agriculture, NWP and Oudh, No. 2303, dated Allahabad, the 10th April 1888, p.162

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ CPIATNWPO., Benares Division, No. 2420/VII- 49, dated Ghazipur, the 10th April 1888, op.cit., p.176

³⁶ CPIATNWPO., Memorandum of Mr. Mulock, Officiating Collector and Magistrate of Ballia, pp. 177-80

³⁷ CPIATNWPO., Jhansi Division, dated Kalpi, the 16th April 1888, op. cit., pp. 193-99

(b) the cultivators, who had no such rights and a small area (c) the agricultural labourers, who were consisted of (i) field labourers (ii) day labourer (iii) two types of *harwahas mafi* and *sanwak*. The land lord class has been excluded from the enquiry, because they were in a better condition and easily got sufficient food. The condition of the *harwaha* was very poor as compared to other classes.

CHAPTER III

CONDITION OF THE LOWER CLASSES OF POPULATION

Before discussing the condition of the lower classes of population¹ it is essential to know all those factors which affected the condition of the lower classes of population. As mentioned in Enquiry Report that their condition were generally satisfactory and if they suffered from the want of food, the main reason behind it was *natural calamity i.e. famine, drought, flood etc.*; because of which there was failure of crops.² While Bipan Chandra wrote that, their conditions were bad due to the lack of means to purchase the available supply of food stuff and not due to the failure of crops. If the Indians did not have the stamina to bear the strain of a single failure of monsoons, it only went to establish their utter poverty.³

Besides natural calamities export of food grains under the **laissez faire** policy of British government was responsible for the bad condition of the poor

¹ CPIATNWPO., No.119s/1-16, dated, Naini Tal, 15th August 1888, op. cit.p.8

² CPIATNWPO., From Sir E. C. Buck, Secretary to the Government of India, Rev. and Agri. Dept. (Famine), To- Secretary to Government, NWP and Oudh, C. No. 44F/8-1, dated Simla, 17th August, 1887, p. 1; William Digby., *Prosperous British India*, New Delhi, 1969, p. 411

³ Bipan Chandra., *The Rise and growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, New Delhi, 1966, p. 31 [revised edition, 2004]

people.⁴ It seemed as one of the principal causes of chronic scarcity of food grains and famine conditions in the country, even of its poverty. The nationalist believed that export of food grains was a cause of poverty and famine, because India sent out not its surplus of food grains but the stock which was required to meet its daily needs; in reality Indians were half starved in order to make possible the trade of their food stuffs. It was of course truly noted by Indians, that during the famines export of grains was reduced but then they claimed that the real damage had already been caused when, in normal year the reserve or surplus stocks of food grains, that might have been used to obviate hardship in the years of famine were exhausted by their export. In a country like India, which suffered so often from the vagaries of weather; the real surplus of food grains could be properly calculated, it was claimed only after providing for the shortage of the year of food deficit.⁵

On the basis of statistics collected by the Famine Commission of 1880, which was presided by the General R. Strachy, from different provinces expressed the view that India produced in normal years a surplus of 4.25 million tons of food grains per annum and that there was no question of the country's food supply running short of the demand. Two members of the commission in their note of dissent stated, the 'surplus' was greatly 'exaggerated' by the majority and that if the surplus was older than the majority had estimated, there would be ample stocks

⁴ R.K.Gohit., *Social and Economic History of Modern India*, New Delhi, 2007, p. 144

⁵ Bipan Chandra., *op. cit.*, p. 81

available in the country when a famine came and that prices of food would not rise to abnormal heights. Mr. Gopaldaswami, the census commissioner for India in 1951, estimated that, 'in or about 1880' India had a surplus of both wheat and rice and this surplus amounted to 1.2 lakh tones; our annual export of wheat and rice 'in or about 1880' amounted to 1.25 million tons, i.e. nearly equal to the amount of surplus estimated by the census commissioner. If this estimate was accepted it would appear that India had in normal years, just sufficient food to maintain the population on an adequate standard of nourishment provided, of course, the available supplies were equitably distributed. In year of deficient rains and consequently short-fall in production a section of the population had to go without food and faced starvation. The Enquiry of 1888 shows that even in normal years certain classes of population particularly landless labourers and menial servants, subsisted on insufficient food so that the surplus of 1.25 million tons that was exported was obtained by keeping a substantial portion of the lower class of agricultural population below subsistence level.⁶

Besides, want of food, debt affected the condition of the lower class of population. As Sir Syed said that because of loans and the rates of interest the condition of farmers had become very deplorable. The cultivators had to expend a

⁶B.M.Bhatia., An Enquiry into the Conditions of the Agricultural classes in India, 1888 , ed.,K.N.Chaudhary.,*Economic Development of India under the East India Company (1814-58):A Selection of contemporary Wrightings*,Cambridge,1971

heavy labour in the growing crops but the *mahajans* reaped a good harvest out of it, while the cultivators remained in debt permanently. The demands for loans were great and the numbers of *mahajans* were small. This had naturally resulted in raised rates of interest on the loaned money.⁷

Heavy land revenue demand and uncertainty of tenancy right is also one of the important reasons not only for poverty but also for famine. Even during the normal years, a very little amount of the net rents had remained with the peasants and they were not able to invest in agricultural operation. While at the time of natural calamities, peasants had no option except to borrow money to meet their production and consumption requirements.

Now we come to discuss the condition of the lower classes of the population, on the basis of Enquiry Report in NWP and Oudh. As Mr. E. B. Alexander, collector of Etawah sums up the information furnished by the *tehsildar* under the directions issued by his predecessor, Mr. Whiteway. In the course of his remarks Mr. Alexander says: 'on one point, the statistics furnished do throw light, and that the extent to which the cultivators fall in debt in anything like a bad year and the utter absence of any saving laid up in good years beyond a small amount of jewellery and occasionally a few surplus head of cattle'. On the question whether the ordinary cultivators suffer from want of food, he says that, it depends

⁷ Shan Muhammad., *Sir Syed's Vision of India and its people*, Delhi, 2008, p. 104

entirely upon two factors, the general rate of the loan market and his own credit both of which are, of course dependent in a great measure upon the season.⁸ In Muttra, for instance, the number of the bad debts which money lenders had made between 1877 and 1888 had caused the money market to be very unfavourable for borrowers; and even men who were known to be honest and not overwhelmed with debt, had great difficulty in raising money to live during the two months before harvest, when nine cultivators out of ten look to their *bohra* to make them subsistence advances.⁹ There can be no doubt but that in Muttra such deficiency drove a large number of cultivators between 1878 and 1888 to abandon their homes and move to other parts of the country, where they could get a living by day work or had friends to support them, Muttra however, was exceptionally unlucky. For about eight years there were not too really good harvests running, whilst there were twice three bad ones running and nearly all the rest were below average, or almost only average.¹⁰ In Etawah, he says that 'I do not suppose that, except absolute paupers who are dependent on alms, any class of the population here is suffering from insufficiency of food.'¹¹ In the village Marhapur, which stands on the Jumna river and did not suffer from food grains. There are eighty-seven families, of whom fifty five are cultivators, about twenty day labourers and

⁸ CPIATNWPO., Agra Division, dated Etawah, the 15th May, 1888, op. cit., p. 139

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 140

¹¹ Ibid.

the other twelve *baniās* and artisans. The fifty five cultivating households were all in debt. At the close of the year, sums varying from Rs. 18 to Rs. 2, most of the farmers were under debt , also thus were obliged to part with jewellery and cattle.¹² For example, Mani Ahir with no family except a wife, and cultivating a little over two acres as a Shikmi tenant, borrowed Rs. 151 and only repaid Rs. 3. He was in debt, therefore, at the end of the year to the amount of Rs. 17, including interest, and was also in arrears with half his rent in consequence of which he resigned his holding. He was able to support life by the sale of a *Kaddu* crop and of a bullock, but had a very hard time of it, and undoubtedly towards the end of the year suffered from want of sufficient food. He must have suffered severely during the first six months of the year, though he had been able to eke out a living by day work and by the produce of two cows which he kept.¹³ Ajudhya *Mallah*, another small tenant with a family of four persons, borrowed Rs. 11, which he failed to pay back. At the end of the year he was about Rs. 50 in debt, and probably in the current year has found it difficult to raise a further loan, and has therefore, suffered from insufficiency of food between December and the end of March.¹⁴

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 141

In the Phaphund, *tehsil*, the village selected was Mainpuri. It was a small village in which there were only 35 houses, about half of which were occupied by cultivators and the rest by day-labourers, one *dhobi*, and one *hajjam*. The *tehsildar* selected Balgobind Chaube for special inquiry. He was a middle class cultivator holding about twelve acres at a rent of Rs. 68, and having a family of five, of whom one was under 10 and the others adults. His *kharif* cultivation was very unfortunate, and in order to live from October onwards up to March he had to sell cattle worth Rs. 56. The *rabi* was poor, though not so bad as the *kharif*, and in order to meet his rent he had to borrow Rs. 54. At the end of the year he was about Rs. 70 in debt, but had not reached the stage at which actual want begins to make itself felt.¹⁵ The *tehsildar*'s opinion about the village was that, the village was an ordinary one, with a certain amount of canal irrigation, but a small site, it is near Phaphund, which was a market of some importance, at which the people would rapidly obtained supplies. Nearly all the cultivators could get advances and were not badly off in the matter of food, though they all got into debt. The day-labourer mostly suffered, their being so little field work, and the majority of them could only occasionally get sufficient food.¹⁶

It was noted by Mr. E.B. Alexander, 'by a sufficient quantity of food is meant three-fourth of a *seer* of grain for a man and half a *seer* for a woman. This

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 143

is usually eaten with some condiment, such as *ghi* or with some kind of vegetable relish, of course, where milk or curds or some other not less substantial kind of food is taken instead, the allowance of grain can be greatly reduced. The general result of this enquiry may be summed up to have been to show that in the villages selected the bulk of the cultivators have not been suffering in this way that owing to high prices the labourers and a few of the smaller or exceptionally unfortunate cultivators have been so suffering between December 1887 and March 1888, the good rabi harvest just cut, having, however, afforded universal relief since the end of the latter month.¹⁷

In Rohilkhand Division, Mr. T. W. Holderness, collector of Pilibhit says that, in the several villages where he conducted enquiry, he took representatives of different classes, and endeavoured to ascertain their income, their debt, their household property and agricultural capital and their ordinary mode of living. At the top of the scale is the substantial tenant cultivating 30 to 40 acres and owing a number of plough and milch-cattle, and at the bottom is the day-labourer who earns from one *anna* to two *annas* a day by precarious jobs, or who take service as a farm hand on Rs. 2 a month with one of the well to do cultivators. His wife and all his children who can work, add something to this narrow income by gathering fuel, or watching fields, or carrying loads, or herding cattle. The landless labourer's condition, however, must still be regarded as by no means all that could be

¹⁷ Ibid.

desired. The united earning of a man, his wife and two children cannot be put at more than Rs. 3 a month. When prices of food grains are low or moderate, work regular, and the health of the household good, this income would enable the family to have one fairly good meal a day, to keep a thatched roof over their heads, and to buy cheap cotton clothing and occasionally a thin blanket. Cold and rain undoubtedly entail considerable suffering to such households, as the members are insufficiently clothed, and cannot afford fires. A few twigs or dry sticks constitute the height of their ambition, and there, owing to the increasing value and scarcity of wood, are more and more difficult for the poor man to obtain.¹⁸

The condition of the class immediately above the landless day-labourers, was slightly better off than the landless labourers but, it cannot be said about him, that, he had always enough to eat or wore sufficiently warm clothes. He was generally a little in debt, and he would be more in debt where the moneylenders were not very cautious as to the amount of his advances.¹⁹

In Allahabad Division, Mr. White, collector and magistrate, writing from Banda, says about the condition of the labourer class of the population that, 'whether it be true that the greater proportion of the population of India suffer from a daily insufficiency of food. I should first wish to know what insufficiency

¹⁸CPIATNWPO., From- T. W. Holderness, To- Commissioner, Rohilkhand Division, No. 756/xii-162, dated Pilibhit, 13th April, 1888, pp. 144-45

¹⁹ Ibid.

of food is. No answer can be given but this, that a very large number of the lower classes of population clearly demonstrate by the poorness of their physique that either they are habitually half starved, or have been in early years exposed to the severities or traits of a famine'.²⁰ One of the cases of Banda, is the family of Lutna *Chamar*, of Lahuria, near Kalinjar as he said that, there was only he and his old mother in family, he was married, but *gauna* had not taken place. He worked as an agricultural labourer, got about Rs. 2 a month as wage. His father died some Rs. 20 in debt. He cuts grass for *zamindar*'s cow, and so on. For it the *zamindār* paid him one *anna* a day. In crop time he got wheat or gram bread, generally ate *arhar*, *masur*, rice and *juar*. He had been married for five or six years, but cannot get his wife to live with him. Yet for want of money, his mother also worked for the *zamindār* and got wages; but she was very old and feeble. He got his clothing from his share of the cotton-picking. For every five *seers* of cotton picked the labourers got half *seers*. He paid the *koeri* four annas for weaving one dhoti'.²¹

In Benaras Division, Mr. E. Rose, Collector of Ghazipur, in dealing with another portion of these provinces, writes a discriminating report, in which he depreciates much of the information given by the people of their own condition. His inquiries extended to about twenty villages and he got more satisfactory

²⁰ CPITANWPO., From- J. White, To- Commissioner, Allahabad Division, Dated, Banda, 3rd March, 1888, p. 160

²¹ Ibid., pp. 160-61

information in the villages which were under his superintendence in the court of wards than elsewhere. Food prices at that time were abnormally high owing to local harvests being destroyed by excessive and untimely rains and also caused epidemic i.e., plague.²²

Further he says that with reference to the first of the two classes, he has found as a result of his Enquiry, that where the holding is of average size, and the tenant encumbered with debt, when his rent was not excessive and there was an average out-turn of the produce; in fact, the conditions were favourable, the position of agriculturist, whether as small proprietor or otherwise, were upon the whole a fairly comfortable one. He and his family were well clothed and fed, the women of household have a little jewellery and litigation in the courts was not an impossible luxury. When it was considered that seventy-eight percent of tenants in this districts were those who had occupancy rights and that thirty one percent of the total cultivated area was recorded as proprietary, it follows that unless there was some disturbing element, some variation of the conditions, to which, Mr. Rose has referred, that 'the major portion of the agriculturist population is not in that condition to which reference is made in the resolution of the Government of India, as one in which there is a daily insufficiency of food. But unfortunately, these conditions do not always exist. The holding is too small for the number of the persons depending upon it, the tenant is in debt, his rent is usually high and now

²² William Digby., op. cit., p. 411; CPIATNWPO., Appendix A, p. 267

and again there comes the inevitable failure or partial failure of the crops, the consequences of floods, storms or drought. As a rule, a very large proportion of the agriculturists in the village are in debt. Sometimes the debt is one which has recently been contracted for marriage ceremony or a lawsuit, but almost always, so far as the debtor is concerned, an indeterminate quantity, he has seldom an account of it, and only knows what he paid off at the last harvest or when the last payment was made'.²³

He concluded his enquiry by saying that amongst many of the lower classes, including the small proprietor, the cultivator, the day-labourers, and others who fall in the same category, the daily supply of food may be of coarse quality, yet the quantity was sufficient as a rule to maintain health and strength but that luxuries of any kind were positively unknown and the clothing was not sufficient for protection against the severity of the cold weather.²⁴

Mr. Ward, Commissioner of Jhansi Division says, 'It will be seen that both Mr. Hardey and Babu Sanwal Das were led by their inquiries to the conclusion that the very small proportion of the population of this division are habitually underfed. But it must be remembered that they have been years of prosperity. Food has been poured into the division. The standard of living among the poorer

²³ CPIATNWPO., From- E. Rose, To- Commissioner, Benares Division, No. 2420/vii-49, dated Ghazipur, 10th April, 1888, pp. 170-71

²⁴ Ibid., p. 177

classes however is higher than in other parts of India; it certainly is higher than the eastern districts of the provinces. Like everything else in India the style of living is much governed by traditions. The people of these parts though necessary poor from the barren nature of the country, have always maintained a rude independence. In lieu of starving they would rather prefer to rob than to beg but they would stay at home and die without a murmur'.²⁵

In Lalitpur, the agriculturists were fully free from debt, and the *Zamindars* were beginning to appreciate the value of their land. In Jhansi Act XVII of 1882 had effected a noticeable reform. But in Jalaun the burden of indebtedness was very heavy.²⁶

In Faizabad division, Mr. A. H. Harington, Commissioner of the division says that, one-fifth of total population of India which comprises the classes most liable to suffer from famine, the labourers, beggars, weavers and potters; amounting in number to about 13 millions of adult males, or a population of nearly 40 million, including women and children, or 20 percent of the total population of British India. One fourth of this one-fifth (20%) of the total population suffer from

²⁵ CPIATNWPO., From- G. E. Ward, To- Director of Land Records and Agriculture, NWP and Oudh, no. 2671, dated Jhansi, 2nd June, 1888, p. 187

²⁶ Ibid.

a chronic insufficiency of food, and that another 5 per cent get just enough food, and no more.²⁷

In Rae Bareli Division, Mr. H. C. Irwin, Deputy Commissioner of Rae Bareli, presented a report, in which he writes that, there was extreme scarcity of warm clothes among the people examined. His statement shows, for 173 persons, only 10 blankets, 16 *razais*, and 24 quilts. So more than three-fourth of them go through the winter with no better covering than the common country blanket, such as, made by the *Gararias*, and sold for, from 10 to 14 *annas*, than a *dohar*. Mr. Gartlant's statement shows eight blankets, two *razais* and five quilts among seventy one, a still lower proportion.²⁸

About the condition of the Indian cultivator and labourer, he says that, the upper class of tenants²⁹ was above the want of food. But the small cultivators, i.e., the large majority, must be always on the brink of want of food, though the services of *Mahajan* generally saved them from going further than the brink.³⁰

Conclusively, famine was not the single reason for the bad condition of the lower class population, besides it, export of food grains, indebtedness, British land

²⁷ CPIATNWPO., From- A. H. Harington, To- Director of Land Records and Agriculture, NWP and Oudh, No. 663, dated Fyzabad, 4th April, 1888, p. 210

²⁸ CPIATNWPO., From- Lieut. Colonel Fendall, To- Director of Land Records and Agriculture, NWP and Oudh, no. 786, dated Raebareli, 2nd April, 1888, p. 214

²⁹ CPIATNWPO., dated Naini Tal, 15th August, 1888, op.cit., p. 8

³⁰ CPIATNWPO., dated Raebareli, 2nd April, 1888, op.cit., p. 215

revenue policy, epidemic etc. were also responsible for their poor condition. They ate generally coarse and cheapest grains and could eke out a subsistence as long as they procured not less than 14 *seers* to a rupee, while, the daily earnings of the day labourers vary from an *anna* to an *anna* and a half ($1\frac{1}{2}$), which are not sufficient to provide a full meal. Therefore, they borrowed some money to keep their body and soul together, but if the loan could be secured either in money or grain, then they lived on as much grain as they could get, and lived partly on *ber* (plum) and *bhaji* (*chan-ka-sag* or gram crop). They not only suffered from want of food but also extreme cold due to extreme shortage of warm clothes.

CHAPTER IV

FAMINE, ITS CAUSES AND RELIEF POLICY IN NORTH WESTERN PROVINCES AND OUDH (1800-1888)

Enquiry Report of 1888 shows that, if the conditions of the lower classes of population were poor, then, the main reason behind it was natural calamity, especially famine. This chapter deals with the causes of the famines in NWP and Oudh, and the relief policies adopted by the British government.

Famine can be defined as “a state of extreme hunger, suffered by the population of a region as a result of the failure of the accustomed food supply”, but this definition of calamity is only valid for the period before the introduction of railways and development of the means of transport. Because in the absence of well established channels of trade, people depended upon limited sources of the region and their immediate neighborhood. After the failure of local crops, it is incredibly difficult or impossible to meet their want from other parts of the country. Therefore famine under these conditions means absolute want of food in the region. And every section of the society either low or high suffered in the same way.¹

¹ B.M.Bhatia, *Famine in India*, Bombay, 1963, pp. 1-2; Ajit.K.Dasgupta, *A History of Economic Thought*, New York, 1993, pp. 58-59.

But after the introduction of railways food grain was always available in the market, but its prices became so high that the poor people were not able to purchase it.² The nature of famine was changed only after 1860, which was the period of the construction of railway lines and development of trade. Along with it a class was also created who was the victim of dearth and scarcities.³

The frequency rate of famine was increased in the nineteenth century. From 1765 to 1858, East India Company occupied the *diwani* right and during that period the country experienced twelve famines and four severe scarcities. From 1860 to 1908, famine and scarcity prevailed in one part of the country or the other which are twenty in number within the period of 49 years.⁴

During the period several famines occurred in NWP and Oudh, as mentioned in U. P. district gazetteer, that in 1803, drought followed hail-storm, under British rule. It was also felt in 1805-06 due to the absence of rainfall till the middle of August. The famine of 1837-38 extended to a greater part of the *doab* region and in Aligarh district the distress was severe. There was very high death rate due to sickness, especially cholera. Because of unfavourable seasons and failure of the rain it was again felt in 1860-61. The late arrival of the monsoon and

² M.C.McAlpin., *Subject to the Famine, Food Crisis and Economic Change in Western India(1860-1920)*, Princeton,1983 pp. 19-20.

³ B.M.Bhatia, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 7-10; *Uttar Pradesh District Gazetteer*, ed., Balwant Singh, Allahabad, 1987, pp. 88-89.

the scanty rainfall was the cause for the famine of 1868-69, but the rainfall at the end of January enabled the cultivators to further a satisfactory harvest. In 1877-78, famine again occurred due to scanty rainfall, but a good rainfall in October enabled the cultivators to sow the *rabi* crops.⁵

The famine of 1837-38 was one of the most severe famines of the century in the upper part of India. The area between Allahabad and Delhi was affected by it, but the area between Kanpur and Agra was more badly affected. It was also felt in adjoining native states of Rajputana as far West as Jaipur.⁶ The area which came under the famine was about 11,300 square miles, and 56,000 square miles of which came under British territory and 28,000,000 population was affected while the mortality due to famine was estimated by Colonel Baird Smith about 800,000. It can be also estimate by the statement of Mr. Jhon Lawrence, who wrote that 'I have never in my life seen such utter desolation at that which is now spread over the *perganas* of Hodal and Palwal'. In many places, i.e., Kanpur, Fatehpur, Agra etc dead bodies were lying on the road side, till these were not eaten by the wild animals. In Kanpur a special establishment patrolled the streets and the river to remove the dead bodies.⁷

⁵ UPDG, op. cit., pp. 88-89.

⁶ *Report of the Indian Famine commission, 1880-1885*, Agricole Publishing Academy, New Delhi, 1989, pp.10-11, (1st Reprinted).

⁷ R.C.Dutt., *Land Revenue and Famine in India*, Delhi, 1985, pp. 6-7.

Besides, the failure of absolute rainfall in 1836, which followed by some irregular rainfall of the preceding year,⁸ excessive revenue demand was also caused for the famine. Baird Smith observed that the native society had to face the 1837 famine debilitated by a fiscal system that was oppressive and depressing in its influence and the agricultural population was very discontented. The misery was intense, the poorer classes resorted to jungles, children were sold for a few *seers* of grains, villages were desolated, and even orthodox Brahmins were seen to stealing scraps from dogs.⁹ It was noticed that, the famine of 1860-61 occurred mostly in those areas where the revolt of 1857 had taken place. Because of the revolt of 1857 much of the property was destroyed and much of the land, remained untilled. Irregular and unfavourable seasons of 1858-59 and deficient monsoon of 1860 caused for the great loss of autumn harvest.¹⁰ The rain did not start till the 13th of the July and even after this it rained for few days. Because of it the soil moistened and the seeds were unable to germinate and to reach its maturity.¹¹ The famine was intense only between Agra and Delhi; which was habited by 5 ½ millions of people, and the whole area affected by it was 48,000 square miles.¹² Conditions deteriorated as early as the latter part of June and early July in Meerut

⁸ RIFC, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

⁹ H.S.Shrivastava., *The History of Indian Famines (1858-1918)*, Agra, 1968, p. 26.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 31; B.M. Bhatia., op. cit., pp. 59-63.

¹¹ RIFC., op. cit., pp. 11-12.

¹² Ibid.

Division, when people were driven to use mango-stones as food. Reports received from the neighbourhood of Agra, Allahabad and Fatehpur were similarly in poor condition.¹³

Again in 1868 famine occurred and it affected same areas of NWP, as it happened in 1860, but it was less severe than earlier, except in Muttra, Agra, Jhansi and Lalitpur districts of NWP. While in other parts of the NWP there was some return from the autumn harvest. The summer monsoon of 1868 was not satisfactory between June and September. But irrigation was available on a large extent to protect the crops. One of the interesting experience in this famine was that, peasants were taking only as much water from the canals as was sufficient to save their crops and not to improve the quality of the grain crops. In 1867-68 the areas under cultivation through canals was 2,786 square miles and the crops cultivated were *juar*, *bajra*, *urad*, *moong*, *chari*, and other food and fodder.¹⁴

Lord North became the Viceroy in 1872 and next year he had to face the famine in 1873. The famine was caused primarily due to the failure of rain. The eastern districts of NWP and Oudh were badly affected, which are *kharif* growing areas and the failure of the summer monsoon affected the *kharif* crops

¹³ H.S.Shrivastava., op. cit., p. 31.

¹⁴ B.M.Bhatia., op. cit., pp. 77-78.

badly.¹⁵ While the other reason of the famine was the excessive export of food grains.

The famine of 1877 was occurred in NWP and Oudh due to scanty rainfall. It reduced to 12.04 inches as against the average rainfall of 36.85 inches between June and September 1877. The *kharif* crop was completely failed in Agra, Meerut, Sitapur, Jhansi, Lucknow division, Bundelkhand district of Allahabad and Rai Bareilly. In other regions the loss was lesser than here. The total loss of food gains in the provinces was estimated about 3.42 million tons.¹⁶

Export of food grains from the affected area to other part of India was also a cause for the famine. In the preceding three years because of good rainfall, there were plenty of crops. And its prices had fallen to a lower level, as had never happened during the 20th century. At that time in England, the demand of wheat increased and its export trade was recognized in the regions. At the same time famine occurred in Bombay and Madras and surplus of both wheat and common grain was drained there. The intensity of trade can be estimated by it, that the grain was carried through river in spite of rails, because of its quantities. However, in NWP and Oudh the local stocks were very low and not able to meet the demand of the people at the time of famine. Therefore, export of food grains under the policy

¹⁵ibid.

¹⁶ B.M.Bhatia., op. cit., pp. 98-99.

of Laieser faire of British government was also a cause for famine.¹⁷ The nationalists believed that export of food grains was an important cause of poverty and famine, because India sent out not its surplus of food grains but its stock too, which was required to meet their daily needs.¹⁸ It clearly shows that natural calamity was not the single reason for famine

However, it is not wrong to say that the failure of monsoon was the main reason behind the famine because it was the main source of irrigation for Indian cultivators. But it was not the only reason, besides it there were also some other reasons too for the famine. Before the coming of the British in India, the Indian villages were self-sufficient. The British government did a great injury to the old economic structure and destroyed it completely. In the olden time the cultivators produced food grains for self consumption. They used to keep enough stock of food grains for facing eventualities such as famines, drought etc. Under the modern system, the cultivator was required to pay the rent in cash. Therefore, it became obligatory for the cultivator to sell off his produce in the market and brought it again for self consumption and due to which agriculture was commercialized.¹⁹

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 144.

¹⁸ Bipan Chandra., op. cit., p. 81.

¹⁹ R.K.Gohit., op. cit., p. 142.

British land revenue policy was also responsible for famine, as the Banaras division came under the sovereignty of the Company in 1775, but for more than thirty years the administration was left to the Raja of Banaras, who at first paid a fixed sum of 23 lakhs. The amount was raised to 40 lakhs by Warren Hasting, but in 1788 under Jonathan Duncan, who had recently been appointed resident at Banaras, the revenue was simply levied on the highest sum which could be offered by anybody. It became the cause of much oppression and distress.²⁰ In 1795 the state demand was permanently fixed in Banares.²¹ By the Regulation VII of 1822 the state demand was fixed at 83% of the gross rental of estates and permitted the settlement to be revised from time to time.²² But Bentinck noted that under this settlement different officers had adopted different practices. In one district the practice seems to have been to assess with reference to the produce of the land alone, by fixing rates for each description of crop, while in another, the capabilities of the land are alone looked to class and assess the soils accordingly.²³

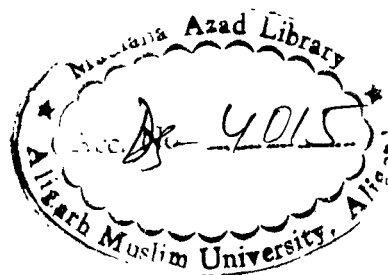
Under Regulation IX of 1833, the state demand in northern India was reduced to 66% of the rental and settlement was made for thirty years, but in

²⁰ IGI., United Provinces., Vol. II, op. cit., pp. 100-01.

²¹ R.C.Dutt., *Victorian Age*, Vol. II, op.cit., 1960, p.33.

²² Ibid., p. 34

²³ Asiya Siddiqi., op.cit., p. 70.



practice it was revised after a very short period.²⁴ By the Act of XIV of 1873, a new method was introduced according to which the revenue demand was fixed on the basis of the revised rental system, and the demand was fixed between 45 and 55 percent.²⁵ Powell rightly says that, it was the custom in the last days of the Muslim rule to fix the state-demand at a very high figure, and then to realize as much of the nominal demand as was possible from year to year. The mistake by the British administration was to adhere to this high nominal demand, and try to realise the whole of it. Some British administrators saw this mistake, and one collector, Mr. Dumbleton wrote that the Settlement of 1802 pressed beyond a reasonable demand, and also complained that the severe rates of the Nawab's government were stereotyped by the British ruler, without the some elasticity in realizing.²⁶

When the famine of 1860 was over, Colonel Baird Smith was deputed to examine the cause of famines. He reported that the famine of 1860 was less severe than the famine of 1837. An account of the more lenient land assessments was

²⁴ R.C.Dutt, *Victoria Age*, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 34; Powell Baden., *The Land System of British India*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1892, pp. 23-24.

²⁵ R.C. Dutt, *Victoria Age*, Vol. II, op. cit., p.194.

²⁶ Baden Powell, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 14.

made by the Government and recommended a Permanent Settlement of the land revenues, such as had been made in 1793 in Bengal.²⁷

FAMINE RELIEF POLICY

During the famine of 1837-38, the government accepted that their main duty is to provide employment to those who can work while those who were helpless and were not able to work come under business of the charitable public.²⁸ Wherever there was large demand for employment, public works were opened but the wages were very low. At the same time relief committees were also formed to feed those who were unable to work. Suspension and remission of revenue were also given. The remission was about Rs. 95,000,000 or nearly half of the demanded revenue of the affected area. Loans and advances were given for payment, improvement or for seed grains, otherwise it was totally discouraged. However, about 100,000 people were employed in relief work at the total cost of about Rs. 20, 00,000 for several months and about Rs. 350,000 were spent on charitable relief.²⁹

²⁷ R.C.Dutt, 'British Land Revenue System and Famines in India', ed. Nand Brahma, *Famines in Colonial India*, New Delhi, pp. 162-63.

²⁸ R.C.Dutt., *Land Revenue and Famine in India*, op.cit., p. 6.

²⁹ RIFC., 1880-85, op. cit., p. 11.

The principle of relief of the famine of 1860-61, was the same as adopted in 1837.³⁰ During the famine of 1868-69, in NWP a clear policy was made and the famous 'saving every life' instructions were issued by the government to its officers. The local affairs were instructed by the lieutenant governor that every district officer would be personally responsible; that no deaths should occurred from starvation, which could have been avoided by any exertion or arrangement on his part or that of his subordinate. But it was only accepted on paper in spite of in practice.³¹

Excluding Ajmer, the total amount spent on charitable relief in the 24 districts of NWP was only Rs. 2.84 lakhs and about 15,609 people were relieved for nine months, when famine was at its peak, except in Lalitpur. This form of relief did touch more than 1% of the population.³²

Relief was given in the form of cooked food. Works for permanent utility was not provided for long time as in 1861. But several minor works were opened on low wages under the civil officers. Work in piece was discouraged and replaced by a fair amount of work. In NWP about 65,000 people were employed daily on

³⁰R.C. Dutt., *Land Revenue and Famine in India*, op. cit., p. 7.

³¹ B.M.Bhatia., op. cit., pp. 79; RIFC., 1880-85, op. cit., p. 32.

³² Ibid.

works for twelve months and about 18,000 daily received gratuitous relief and the total cost was estimated about Rs. 46, 00,000.³³

During the famine of 1873-74, the relief measures had been adopted in the same way as in 1860-61. In Gorakhpur and Basti districts works opened in February or March 1874 on low wages. Due to lack of discipline and light task, the number of workers rose to more than 200,000. As a result of it, the wages was reduced to the subsistence level, strong discipline; hard tasks and strict masters were introduced. And labourers were not allowed to go home at night.³⁴

Arrangements were also made for relief in September 1877. Some interesting points had been in the history of this famine. For the first time relief works were placed entirely under the officials of the public works department, with little control from the local civil officers. But its effect was not good. Gratuities were provided on the principle of giving cooked food and for it residence was required. But it was very unpopular and those who received this form of relief were put out of caste. There was no any system of village inspection was adopted.³⁵

Conclusively, the frequency of famine was increased in the 19th century in India. NWP and Oudh suffered from the severe famines of 1837-38, 1860-61,

³³ RIFC., 1880-85, p. 15; Dutt R. C., *Land Revenue and Famine in India*, op. cit., p. 9.

³⁴ RIFC, 1880-85, op. cit., p. 15.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 20; B.M.Bhatia, op. cit., p. 100.

1873-74, and 1877-78. The main reason behind these famines is the failure of rainfall or scanty rainfall. Besides this, revolt of 1857, export of food grains, commercialization of agriculture and British land revenue policies were also responsible for these famines. British government adopted various relief policies in the form of gratuitous relief, private charity, relief of *purdanashin* women and suspension of revenue etc., but these were only accepted on paper in spite of in practice. However, one of the important characteristics of famine during this period is not local but universal.

CHAPTER V

CONSEQUENCES OF FAMINES: PRICE RISE, INSUFFICIENCY OF FOOD AND INDEBTEDNESS

Famine affected the whole national economy during the nineteenth century. There was a steady rise in the prices throughout the period due to increased facilities for export provided by the railways and the recurrence of famines at short intervals. The gradual rise in prices did not benefit the agriculturists much, as their individual food grain surpluses were small and the middleman cornered the profits. On the other hand, it reduced the day labourers, both agriculturists and non-agriculturist, to a condition of chronic semi-starvation. In such a condition, due to lack of saving of food grains and money, poor people did not have any option except to take debts to meet their needs. However, the price rise, insufficiency of food and indebtedness etc. are the outcomes of the famine, which is discussed as follows.

PRICE RISE: The history of price rise in NWP¹ is not differing from the history of prices throughout India. During the first half of the nineteenth century, a good crop meant low prices and a bad crop meant higher prices. Before the advent of railways there was extra-ordinary variation in the distances which now considerably reduced. There was also a big difference between harvest and market

¹ IGI., United Provinces, II, op.cit., pp. 1-2.

prices, which continued more or less until 1865. But, when means of communication started improving, there was a general rise in prices in those provinces, as elsewhere in India. One of the remarkable features, of the development of means of communication, especially railways, is the equalization of prices all over the country.² As Irfan Habib has pointed out railways and steamship transport enabled the large quantities of food grains and other products to be exported, with a large margin uncovered by imports tended to raise prices.³

However we see that how the nature of famine in the latter half of the nineteenth century had changed from the shortage of food supply to the lack of purchasing power. No doubt the development of communication and transport were helpful in lessening the local scarcity but at the same time over the country as a whole, there was rise in prices of food grains and the poorer section of the society was unable to meet their needs.⁴ Thus, at the time of famine, there was sharp rise in the prices in spite of the lack of food in the region. Because of the development of a large export of grain trade, which was earlier conventionally kept as a domestic stock, there was a continuous drain of food grains from the country which contributed to the rise in prices of food grains. Therefore, in spite of

² IGI., op. cit., Vol. XXIV, pp. 194-95.

³ Irfan Habib. , *Indian Economy*, op. cit., p11.

⁴ The government records of the time on the subject contain frequent references to hoarding and cornering of supplies of food grains by trade and speculators. Among the published reports, a good account of the feverish speculative activity in grain in times of famines is to be found in Baird Smith's *Reports on Effects of Famine on Manchester Import Trade in NWP, 1861*.

natural scarcity, human and institutional factors were much responsible for distress and starvation. As Baird Smith noted that, the feverish speculative activity in grain trade that was going on during the famine of NWP and also the strange phenomenon that prices had risen on account of active export trade to the famine levels in district having most bountiful crops. Similar opinion has been also given by Colvine for the same famine of 1858-60, that “where there is canal irrigation in *purganah* Muzaffarnagar the crops are thriving on high prices.”⁵ The prices were not only rising in affected area but also in the neighbouring district, i.e., in Kanpur district wheat was sold at 15 *seers* to a rupee from December 1860 to February 1861. In Mathura, Aligarh, Meerut and Agra wheat was sold at about double of its normal prices during the famine.⁶ It is very difficult to estimate any precise way about the affect of a short harvest on prices, but it can be said that generally in the time of great scarcity the prices of food grains rise to three times from their ordinary amount. The prices of food grains of the masses may be 20 to 30 *seers* per rupee in ordinary years but at the time of great scarcity it would rise to 8 or 10 *seers* per rupee and even higher.⁷ Henvey, rightly said that, the fundamental factor which distinguished the modern famine from those of the old days, was the steep rise in the prices of food grains because of the development of railways and trade.

⁵ Colvin's Memorandum being Annexure to Letter No. 217 dated, 14 November, 1860, from Magistrate, Muzaffarnagar to Commissioner Meerut Division.

⁶ Baird Smith, *Report on the Effects of Famine on Manchester Trade*, op. cit., para 20.

⁷ RIFC., op. cit., p. 27.

Along with it a class also emerged, who subsisted on money wages, and this class badly suffered at the time of famine because of the high prices of food grains on the one hand and the loss of employment and income on the other hand. As he mentioned that “when wheat is selling at 8 *seers* a rupee, a man who earns a rupee once a fort night, must be hard pushed for a living. During famine, prices had gone so high that the labours contractors were reducing the numbers of labour and their wages were unable to meet the inflationary trend of the market.”⁸

Even in *Doab*, the irrigated tract, people had suffered because of high prices, while the crops were cultivated in the area; the equal distribution of food grain among the population, the quantity was sufficient for the survival at the hard time of drought years, without much loss of life. But the rate of mortality in the famine of 1858-60 was “a maximum of two lakh deaths”. The reason given by Colvine in his account of the irrigated tract of the Muzaffarnagar district lay in the extra-ordinary rise in prices.⁹

INSUFFICIENCY OF FOOD: One of the outcomes of the famine is insufficiency of food or want of food as earlier discussed, that food grains were available in market but the lower classes of population were unable to purchase it because of the price rise. The poverty of Indian masses was very well known and

⁸ Vide Henvey, ‘*Narrative in North-Western Provinces, 1871.*

⁹ Mr. Colvin stated, “Where there is canal irrigation in *Parganah* Muzaffarnagar, the crops are fairly thriving, but the people are starving on high prices”, vide *Home (Public) Proceedings*, No. 47, December 1860, No. 47.

accepted by the British Government. As Lord George Hamilton accepted on 3rd February 1903 and again on 10th November of the year that “India is a poor country”.¹⁰ In 1888 the government of India, declared, that in all parts of India, there is numerous population who lives from hand to mouth and always in debt.

The classes which generally suffered from the insufficiency of food because of high prices were non-agricultural classes, i.e., poor artisans, weavers and day-labourers etc. We can get the information about the suffering classes from those Enquiries which were made on famine relief, as in the case of the famine of 1861 in NWP. Baird Smith’s report is very important in which he says that the ordinary agricultural labourers were the common inmates of the relief houses.¹¹ As regarding the suffering castes, he writes in another part of his report, that the largest portion was from the common village labourers, next came the native weavers, while all other castes were represented by a mere fraction of the whole numbers.¹²

One of the interesting evidence related to the suffering classes, furnished by the census of 5000 labourers on relief works, was taken by Mr. James White during the famine of 1869-70 in the Bijnore district in NWP. Among the 5000 relief workers, 2030 were *chamars*, nearly all of them were believed to have been field

¹⁰ Loveday., *History and Economics of Indian Famine*, New Delhi, 1985, p. 112.

¹¹ Baird Smith., part II, *Report on the Effects of Famine on Manchester Trade*, op. cit., Para-9.

¹² Ibid.

hands, ploughman and day labourers. *Jath* numbered 33, *Rawas* 34, *Lodhas* 3, and Rajputs 4; these agricultural castes were either proprietors or cultivating tenants. Among the artisan classes, the most predominant were the Hindu and the *Musalman Julahas* (weavers) the two together numbering 816. The numbers of other castes were insignificant *Rangrez* (dyers), *Barhai* (carpenter) 7, and *Dhunia* (carder) 31.¹³

When we go through the Enquiry Report, we see that the commissioner could not find from his personal inquiries that any unusual distress was prevailing there. According to the deputy Commissioner of Agra, it was the town population that was really suffering, the Deputy Commissioner of Allahabad said that the lower strata-hired labourers and poor artisans feel the rise in prices but yet no one has complained. The Deputy Commissioner of Sitapur and Jhansi said that the people were healthy and the rate of crime was low. In Benares, price rise was felt by the poorer classes but there has been no scarcity of employment. In the same way the Deputy Commissioner of Rai Bareilly, says that there was no want of food because there is much employment for agricultural labourers and they are generally paid in kind (grain). Therefore they were not affected by price rise. Collector of Rohilkhand reported that the petty professional men, clerks and other residents in towns and villages were affected by price rise, but there was plenty of

¹³ Henvey's Narrative, op. cit., The Census was taken on 2 September, 1869, proceeding home (public), No. 102, [Famines], December, 1871.

works for labourers and field cultivators. The Deputy Commissioner of Lucknow reported that non-agricultural classes were affected by price rise but employment was available without difficulty. And the report of Faizabad's Deputy Commissioner shows that there was no material distress and no increase in begging.¹⁴

In the Enquiry report of Kanpure, H. M. Bird mentioned that in good years the inhabitant did not suffer from insufficiency of food, that the loss or partial loss of one crop in a year affected those, who depend on cultivation alone. But it was the labourer class who was generally affected by the price rise. The inhabitants themselves himself say that they were right enough in ordinary years, but at the same time they reduced their ordinary consumption of food by one third. There had however been two inferior crops and one very bad within one succession.¹⁵ It also appears through the report that, there was constant employment for labourers and they earned from one *anna* and six piece to two *anna* a day and it rising to 3 *anna* at harvest time. According to Mr.Bird it is not right to say that they were suffering from an insufficiency of food, and there was insufficient employment

¹⁴CPIATNWPO., From Chief Secretary to Government, NWP and Oudh; To, Secretary to the Government of India; Revenue and Agricultural Departments, No. 11915/1-16, dated Nainital, the 15th August 1888, p.2.

¹⁵ CPIATNWPO., From- H. M. Bird, To- Commissioner, Allahabad Division, dated, Cownpure, 12th March, 1888, pp. 163-64.

because so much employment was available in Kanpur city on high wages.¹⁶ While on the other hand Loveday says that, in most of the famine hit areas enough food was available in India as a whole but people had no money to purchase it. Therefore, they had no other option except to accept employment on any term it was offered to them.¹⁷

In the same way Colonel C. N. Noble district Commissioner of Gonda also had optimistic view that in Gonda district, the poorer and even the poorest agriculturists or labourers did not suffer from insufficiency of food.¹⁸ While A. H. Harington, commissioner of Faizabad division shows dissatisfaction for the report of Colonel Noble, and says that “Noble’s report was interesting, but I think somewhat optimistic. As his report represented that in the month of January and February the poorest inhabitants in the villages were found to have a sufficient food supply. It is hardly safe to infer that in no part of Gonda district, do the poorest agriculturist or labourers suffer from a daily in shortage of food.”¹⁹

Further he says that, the information of settlement report and gazetteers are more reliable than the isolated inquiries here and there, of a few selected and for

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 164.

¹⁷ Loveday, op. cit., p. 112.

¹⁸ CPIATNWPO., Appendix- A, p. 7.

¹⁹ CPIATNWPO., From- A. H. Harington, To- Director of Land Records and Agriculture, NWP and Oudh, No. 663, dated Fyzabad, 14th April 1888, p. 209.

the most part over worked officers. Regarding the impression that the greater proportion of the population of India suffer from a daily insufficiency of food, Famine Commission report shows that one fifth of the total population of India which comprises the classes most liable to suffer from famine, the labourers, beggars, weavers and potters, amounting in number to about 11 millions of adult males or a population of nearly 40 million including women and children or 20% of the total population of British India.²⁰ Of this one fifth, he says that it would not be an over estimate to calculate that at least one fifth of the total population suffered from a chronic insufficiency of food and that another 5% got just enough food and no more. He did not refer about the quality but only the quantity of food.²¹ Regarding the quality of food grains, we have got the information from the Noble's report, that, within the radius of one mile of the busy grain export market town of Nawalganj (5 miles north from Fyzabad) the numerous labourers are accustomed to purchase and eat at a grain-reap cleared by the exporting merchants. This refused mixed grain is locally known by the name *Jharna* and consists of *masur*, *marwa*, *mung*, *urd*, peas and such like less valuable grains. In

²⁰ CPIATNWPO., To- Director of Land Records and Agriculture, NW P and Oudh, No. 663, dated Faizabad, 14th April, 1888, pp. 209-10.

²¹ RIFC., Part II, Section VI, op.cit, para-2.

January 1888 it was sold at a rate of 32 seers per rupee, while *jundri* (maize) one of the cheapest poor men grains was selling at 23 or 24 seers per rupee.²²

However, the general result of the 1888 Enquiry may be summed up by the conclusion that, generally the cultivators did not suffer from the insufficiency of food. Because of the high prices the labourers and a few of smaller or exceptionally unfortunate cultivators have been suffering between December 1887 and March 1888.²³ The two classes of people were really badly off and often suffer from insufficiency of food in NWP: (a) *Harwahas* (b) day labourers. Cultivators were not enough fed, but had what may be called a sufficiency, while petty dealers, though sometimes badly off, had a fluctuating income, which is generally sufficient to keep their heads above water. One thing is also noted that where (Gonda and Bahraich) the rents had been taken in grain, the condition of cultivator classes was better than the irrigated district of NWP, where the cash rents were enforced and competition for land is much greater.²⁴

²² CPIATNWPO., From-Lieutenant colonel, C. S. Noble, To- Commissioner, Fyzabad Division, dated 22nd March, 1888, p. 211.

²³ CPIATNWPO., From- E. B Alexander, To- Commissioner, Agra Division, dated Etawah, 15th May 1888, pp. 142-43.

²⁴ CPIATNWPO., From- Major G. W. Anson, To- commissioner, Faizabad Division, dated 14th June, 1888, pp. 244-45 [Enclosures to Director of Land Records and Agricultures letter No, T-90A, dated 3ed July 1888].

DEBT: Indebtedness was the outcome of famine. As a result of famines there was no saving of grains and money, or very less. And if there was a good harvest then surplus was mainly used to pay the earlier loan and their interest, which was on very high rate. However, there were many reasons or circumstances which were directly or indirectly responsible for it, i.e., social-obligations (marriages, last rites, festivals etc.), land revenue systems, sickness and litigation etc.²⁵

As K. K. Dutta quoted in his report on the enquiry in the rise of prices in India (Calcutta 1914), "In a good year his ignorance and improvidence made him spend the whole of his surplus on marriages and festivities and his extravagance on such occasions often lends him even good years to the doors of the moneylenders".²⁶ The cash loan may have been borrowed by farmer to marry his daughter or son.²⁷ The examples related to loan which were taken by the peasants at the time of marriage to meet their expanses can be traced from the enquiry report of 1888.

(i) Deo Sen, *Dhunia* of Pinjri, 40 years old, has five members in family, his wife, two girls (one of whom is married, but has not gone to her husband yet) and his brother-in-law, aged 10. He holds 11 *bighas* of land at Rs. 23 per annum. He

²⁵ CPIATNWPO., From-E.Rose, To-Commissioner Benares Division, dated Ghazipur, the 10th April 1888, pp. 170-71; From- Babu Sanwal Das, To- Deputy Collector, Jalaun District, Jhansi Division, dated Kalpi, 16th April, 1888, pp. 194-95.

²⁶ Grish Mishra., *An Economic History of Modern India*, Delhi, 1994, p. 117 [2nd Edition, 1948].

²⁷ Elizabeth Whitcombe, op. cit., p. 38.

owes Rs. 13 for which he was obliged to mortgage his buffalo last year. On this debt he pays interest at the rate of 37½ % per annum. He married his daughter four years ago. She was then 10 years old. The marriage cost Rs. 50, out of which his brother found Rs. 40, and he paid Rs. 10 himself. She has not yet gone to her husband. He had about 100 guests at the wedding.²⁸

(ii) Daya Ram is a carpenter, 32 years old and lives by his trade and cultivation. Last year he borrowed a sum of Rs. 30 for the marriage of his daughter; he secured this debt by pledging the ornaments of his daughter given to her by her father-in-law; he has not yet been able to liquidate it. He will do it either, when there is a good turnout from his land, or his income as a carpenter is raised.²⁹

Thus, we can see that how the poor peasant went to the door of moneylender to borrow money. And security could be given on crops or on land. Thus when an account was opened, it was rarely closed, even it increased day by day with the addition of interest in principal amount and becoming the new principal.³⁰ The advances were usually taken for seeds (*bisar*) or food (*khawai*)

²⁸ CPIATNWPO., From- W. Kaye, To- Director of Land Records and Agriculture of NWP and Oudh No.5296/III-71, dated Agra, 29th May, 1888, pp. 122-23.

²⁹ CPIATNWPO *Agra Division*, op. cit., *Tahsil Kasganj, Muza Pahloi*, p. 134.

³⁰ Elizabeth Whitcombe, op. cit., pp. 38-39; J.A.Voelcker., *Report on the Improvement of Indian Agriculture*, New Delhi, pp. 291-92,[Reprinted 1986].

and for marriages or purchase of bullock but besides these it was also taken for funeral ceremonies.³¹

About last rites Tagore in his famous novel “Gora” rightly wrote that “The obsequies that have to be performed at funeral of a parent are the cause of a more serious misfortune than the death itself of a father or mother. No one will accept the excuse of poverty or any other of inability, no matter how it is accomplished; society hear less claim has to the very last furthering”.³² The case related to last rites mentioned in Enquiry Report of 1888 that the family of Murla Koli, age 50 years, and their family members live by their own trade. They are in debt, amounting to Rs. 14, which they had to contract to perform the funeral ceremonies on the death of one of the eldest of the family. Of this debt of Rs. 14, for Rs. 10, they have executed a bond and Rs. 4 is on account of petty debts; they will pay off this debt from their trade income.³³

Heavy assessments and uncertainty of tenancy right is also one of the important reasons, not only for debt but also for famine. Even during the normal years, the very little amount of the net rents had remained with the peasants, and

³¹ CPIATNWPO., From- Liet. Colonei Fendall Currie, To- Director of Land Records and Agriculture of NWP and Oudh, No. 786, dated Rae Bareilly, 2nd April, 1888, p. 215; Elizabeth-Whitecombe, op. cit., pp. 162-64.

³² Grish Mishra., op. cit., p. 117.

³³ CPIATNWPO, From- W. Kate, To- Director of Land Records and Agriculture of NWP and Oudh, No. 5296/III-71, dated Agra, 29th May, 1888, pp. 90-91.

they were not able to invest in agricultural operation. While at the time of natural calamities, peasants had no option except to borrow money to meet their production and consumption requirements.

Under the British rule various new land revenue system were introduced. The condition of the peasantry of the *roytwari* areas was much better than the permanently settled areas. In permanently settled areas additional revenue was realised by the *Abwabs* (illegal cesses). There was continuous intervention of middle men between the government and tenants. And because of that, in many cases tillers of land had lost their firm occupancy right over their holding.³⁴ For instance many years later it was noticed by U.P. zamindari abolition committee, that millions of people were deprived from their rights, which were enjoyed by them since last two thousand years. Hereditary cultivating proprietors of land were turned into reck-rented tenants at will. Its outcome was in the form of continuous economic deterioration and agricultural decline.³⁵ As mentioned in Enquiry report, the holding was too small for the number of persons depending on it and the rent was usually high and tenants did not have any option, except debt.³⁶

³⁴Grish Mishra., op. cit., pp. 135-143.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 116.

³⁶CPIATNWPO., From- J. F. Lumisden, To- Director of Land Records' and Agriculture of NWP and Oudh, No. A, dated 14th April, 1888, p. 170.

However, to meet the *zamindar*'s demand, for land revenue, cultivators had borrowed cash loan which created further incentives to borrow loan.³⁷ As mentioned in Enquiry Report about the debt, that the family of Kashi Ram, *Ahir*, 56 years old, is a hereditary cultivator of 20 acres, 14 poles of lands. He owes to the *zamindar* Rs. 4-2-0 on account of arrears for 1294 *fasli*, Rs. 72-8-0 for 1293 *fasli*, and Rs. 65 for 1292 *fasli*, total arrears Rs. 141-10-0. In addition to these he has borrowed Rs. 200 from a money lender. When questioned about these debts, Kashi says he will pay them off as soon as the produce in his field allows him to pay; otherwise he will sell, to liquidate them, his two bullocks worth Rs. 40 and one buffalo worth Rs. 40. He has no other property. Kashi attributes the above arrears of rent and debts to there having been no produce at all in his field in 1293 *fasli* and 1294 *fasli*.³⁸

Second example of loan which was taken for land revenue is from *Mauza* Mohauli, *tehsil* Etah, family Dhan Singh, *Thakur*, and 45 years old. He is a hereditary cultivator of 21 acres, 12 poles of land, paying a rent of Rs. 150, and he is a tenant at will of rent-free land measuring 2 acres 11 poles. He borrowed Rs. 35 for payment of rent for *kharif*. Dhan Singh had to take a loan of another sum of Rs. 50 before he could manage his affairs for the whole years, out of the total

³⁷Elizabeth Whitcombe, op. cit., pp. 116-17.

³⁸CPIATNWPO., Agra Division, op. cit., *Tehsil-Etah, Mauza Kisenpur*, p. 105.

amount of debt, Rs. 85; Dhan Singh has paid Rs. 25 by selling his one bullock; the remainder is still due.³⁹

Sickness and litigation were also responsible for loan. Expenses of sickness on medicines and medical treatment were not the only causes for loan but it also affected the agriculture, especially when the sufferer was peasant or able bodied, who could work on field.⁴⁰ In the same way litigation especially due to property disputes were also caused for debt. Because it went up to high court, even it was only for a fraction of acre, cost a heavy amount of money, which could be possible only through loan.⁴¹

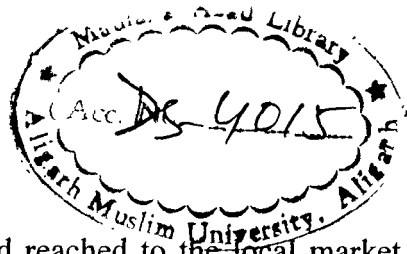
A large majority of the petty *zamindars* and agriculturists took an advance of seed from the *Sahukar* at the time of sowing and repaid it at the time of harvest.⁴² For agricultural purposes, short term loans were much acceptable than long term. Accounts were balanced after every six month. *Kharif* loans in the harvest month of *Aghan* and *Pus* (November-December) and Rabi loans in *Jeth* (May-June). When the level of prices were very high and stocks were at lowest level, cultivator had no option except to borrow grain for sowing or to feed their family in the thin month of the year. The situation was reversed at the time of harvest, when the payment was demanded by the creditors mostly cultivators tried

³⁹ Ibid., *Mauza Mohauli*, p. 108.

⁴⁰ Grish Mishra., op. cit., p. 117.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² CPIATNWPO., Benares Division, op. cit., pp. 171-72.



to pay their due as soon as grain was threshed and reached to the local market. Because of the oversupply of grain to the local market, prices naturally fell down and cultivators might pay back more than two or three times the amount of grain which had borrowed at the time of sowing.⁴³

The cultivators borrowed seeds generally on various rate of interest and terms, which are as follows loan on a *sawai* rate, under which mostly seed has been taken by petty *zamindars* and agriculturists at the time of sowing and repaid it at the time of harvest. The seed was borrowed generally, with promise to pay for one, one and quarter. The amount was only apparent while in reality the amount was double and sometimes more than double. The reason behind it was that, they had not to pay one and a quarter of grains but it was equivalent to the value of the same amount of grain. When they borrowed the seed, the rate of grain was very high, while at the time of repayment, grain was cheaper because of harvest season. The *Sahukars* knew it well and cunningly to have repayment in value, if 16 seers of grain were taken, the *Sahukar* would not take 20 *seers*, because its rate was less at the time of harvest. Therefore he would take one and one-fourth of the prices which prevailed when 16 *seers* were taken. In this way the price at the time of borrowing seed was 16 *seers* per rupee, and at the time of harvest 24 *seers* per rupee. However, the *Sahukars* would take 24 *seers* and one-fourth that are 30 *seers* which is nearly double to the quantity of seed, which had been taken at the

⁴³ Elizabeth Whitcombe., op. cit., p. 165

time of sowing.⁴⁴ In this way he had to pay to the *Sahukars* for the seed borrowed, next he had to pay to the land lords. After both those payment the quantity left with him is not enough to avoid the chance of borrowing seed for the next year of sowing.

The second condition, on which the loan has been given, as mentioned in Inquiry Report, is that, *Mahajan* advances seeds to debtor, one *seer* less than the market price and taken after the harvest, when the debt is replaced, one *seer* more than the market rate.⁴⁵

J. A. Voelcker, mentioned in his report on the improvement of Indian agriculture that, for the improvement of cultivators economic condition and to discourage the control of local moneylenders over the cultivators. Government (State) introduced the *Taccavi* system of advances, for the purchase of seed, cattle etc.⁴⁶ as a rule it was advanced through the *Chaudharies*, and *Muqaddams*, who distributed them among the individual peasant and stood surely for their repayment, loan given to the peasant by the headmen on their own account were also known as *Taqavi* (Taccavi).⁴⁷

⁴⁴ CPIATNWPO., *Jhansi Division*, op. cit., pp. 194-95.

⁴⁵ Ibid., *Benares Division*, op. cit., pp. 171-72.

⁴⁶ J.A.Voelcker, op. cit., pp. 291-92.

⁴⁷ Irfan Habib., *The Agrarian System of Mughal India* (1556-1707), New Delhi, 1999, pp. 163-65. [Second, Revised Edition]

Now the question arises that what were the sources from where the loans had derived. As Irfan Habib says about it that, when the cultivators were burdened with land lord's rent and the state's tax, they did not have any option except to rely on credit (loan) to meet their obligations. However, the ground for usury was already created in pre-modern societies. In India the system of money-lending was carried by professional moneylenders called '*Mahajans*', '*Sahukars*' or '*Bohras*' (and by other regional names), and they existed before the British conquest.⁴⁸

The local grain traders (the village *Baniya*) and the local 'banker' (*Mahajans*) were the main source of loan for peasants.⁴⁹ Apart from professional village bankers and *baniyas*, moneylenders were also come in land lords and prosperous cultivators. The *Zamindars* creditors formed an important group that had all means of controlling the debtors. The peasants in Bareilly, for example, were more or less in debt to their *Mahajans* or their *Zamindars* or *Muqaddams*.⁵⁰ The *Baniya* is also the grain merchant, and to whom, the cultivators were totally depended for the seeds, which they need for sowing of their crops.⁵¹

About the size of debt, E.A.Elliott estimated in 1869, that the sum annually lent out to the agriculturist amounted to Rs. 10 crore in the NWP. Harington gave his estimate of the annually capital, so deployed as 19 million (over Rs. 23

⁴⁸ Irfan Habib, *Indian Economy (1858-1914)*, New Delhi, 2006, p. 74.

⁴⁹ J.A.Voelcker., op. cit., pp. 291-92.

⁵⁰ Sunil Sen., op. cit., pp. 116-17.

⁵¹ J.A.Voelcker, op. cit., pp. 191-92.

crore).⁵² British authority certainly tried to intervene in the activities of money lenders, who charged high rate of interest and because of it, there was continuous growth of rural indebtedness. British government believed that, it was one of the causes of unrest among the peasants. Thus, there were several proposals that came from official quarters for checking the moneylender's activities, i.e., the Oudh settled estates act, 1900 protected the *Taluqdar's* estates. As the act aimed at restricting transfers of lands to parties of the same castes or tribes, as the existing holders. So as to prevent moneylenders from acquiring landed property. Its effects were probably more in favour of rich landlords, who could now extend their estates without fear of competition from rich outsiders.⁵³

But at the same time it was also clear that, because of these moneylenders credit operations, government revenue and land lord's rents were smoothly collected more even during the terms of bad harvests. However most of the legislation and administrative, arrangements, which were directed against moneylenders proved ineffective in their practice.⁵⁴

Besides, price rise, indebtedness and insufficiency of food or starvation, cholera, small pox, fevers due to eating leaves and wild plants and excessive cold

⁵² Irfan Habib., *Indian Economy*. op. cit., pp. 76-77.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 78C; CPIATNWPO., Benares Division, op. cit., pp. 170-71.

⁵⁴ Elizabeth Whitcombe, op. cit., p. 194.

were also the causes for famine.⁵⁵ One of the outcomes of the famines was the increased number of petty crimes against poverty.⁵⁶ During the famine of 1868-70 it increased to 50% in North-Western Provinces.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ RIFC, 1880-85, Part III, op. cit., pp. 243-50.

⁵⁶ Baird Smith, *Report of 14th August 1861*, Para. 57.

⁵⁷ H.S. Shrivastava, op. cit., p. 105

CONCLUSION

On the basis of my study it is established Uttar Pradesh was earlier known as NWP. Oudh was annexed in 1856 and the two provinces, NWP and Oudh were brought together in 1877 under the lieutenant governor of NWP and chief commissioner of Oudh. It covered most of the parts of 'ceded' and 'conquered' provinces. The region was very fertile because its most of the parts lie between Ganga and Jamuna. The major crops of the provinces can be categorised into three (a) *kharif* crops, which are sown from June to August i.e. maize, rice, jowar etc. (b) *Rabi* crops, which are mainly sown in October and November, i.e. wheat, barley, gram etc. and (c) those which are not sown at either of these seasons i.e. sugarcane, indigo etc. The practices of crops mixing and crop rotation in a plot were commonly adopted in NWP and Oudh. The methods were beneficial not only in providing security against the fluctuations of season but, also to control insects, pests and fungicide disease. By these methods bareness and consequent loss of the soil were also prevented.

The classes, who were the subject of the Enquiry of 1888, generally consisted of the lower strata of population. They can be roughly divided into four (a) cultivators, who had more than five acres of land, (b) cultivators, who had a smaller area, (c) labourers and (d) artisans.

The conditions of the lower classes of population were not better. They ate generally the coarsest and cheapest grains. Sometimes they lived partly on

ber (plum) and *bhaji* (*chana ka sag*). The most suffering classes were landless agricultural labourers, among which the conditions of *harwahas* were very poor and there was not much difference between them and slaves. Besides insufficiency of food, they were also suffered from extreme cold, due to scarcity of warm clothes.

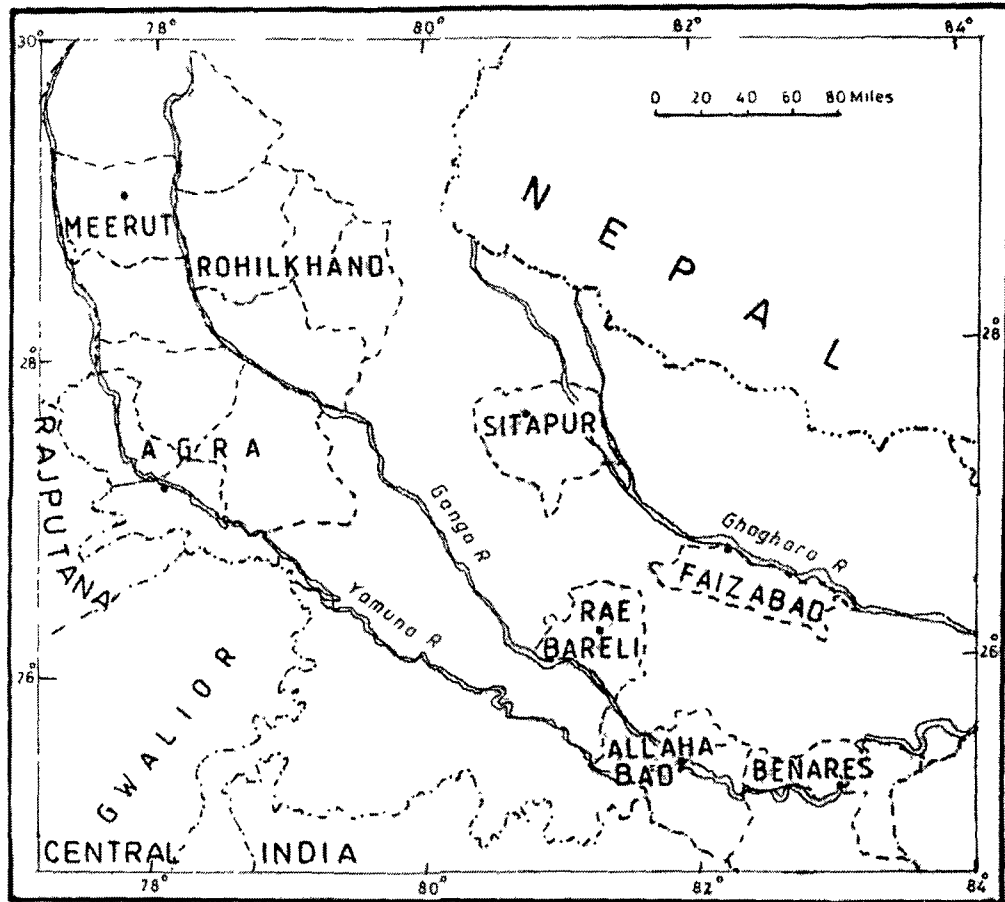
The frequency of famine was increased in the nineteenth century in India. NWP and Oudh suffered from the severe famines of 1837-38, 1860-61, 1868-70, 1873-74 and 1877-78. No doubt failure of absolute rainfall was one of the causes of famine but it was not the only reason. Besides it, there were many other reasons too which caused for famines i.e. export of food grains, British land revenue policies, commercialization of agriculture etc. However, in spite of the failure of rainfall, human and institutional factors were also responsible for famine. Relief policies were adopted by the government in the form of gratuitous relief, private charity, remission and suspensions of revenue etc. It remained on paper but never put in actual practice.

On the basis of various cases as mentioned in the Enquiry report of 1888, price rise, insufficiency of food and indebtedness were the major consequences of famine. Because of those consequences, the lower section of the society was badly affected, especially, labourers, weavers and *chamars* some of them sold their children for few *seers* of gram. The famine took a heavy toll on human liver, caused not only by starvation but also by subsequent diseases, malnutrition and consumption of unwholesome herbs, vegetable and

wild fruits. Increased rate of crime was also one of the outcomes of famine. So it remained a vicious circle.

APPENDIX I

NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES AND OUDH



APPENDIX II

THE FASLI YEAR

FASLI MONTH	MONTH OF LUNI-SOLAR CALENDAR	ENGLISH CALENDAR MONTH
Asarh	3 rd Month	June-July
Savan	4 th Month	July-August
Bhadon	5 th Month	August-September
Kuar	6 th Month	September-October
Kartik	7 th Month	October-November
Aghan	8 th Month	November-December
Pus	9 th Month	December-January
Magh	10 th Month	January-February
Phagun	11 th Month	February-March
Chait	12 th Month	March-April
Baisakh	Ist Month	April-May
Jeth	2 nd Month	May-June

APPENDIX III
NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES AND OUDH, STAPLE
CROPS

CROPS		SOWN IN(FASLI MONTHS)	HARVESTED IN (FASLI MONTHS)
Indegenous Name	Botanical names		
(A) <i>Kharif</i> Sawan	Panicum Fumentaceum	Jeth-Asarh	Bhadon
Kakun	Panicum Italicum	Jeth-Asarh	Bhadon
Makka	Cynosurus Coralanus	Asarh	Bhadon-Kuar
Kodon	Paspalum Scrobiculatum	Asarh	Kuar
Junhari/makai	Maize: Zea Mays	Asarh	Kaur
Jowar	Holcus Sorghum	Asarh	Kartik
Bajra	Holcus Spicatum	Asarh	Kartik
Pulses: urd/Mash	Dolichos Pilosus	Asarh	Bhadon and Kartik
Moth	Phaseolus Acoritifolius	Asarh	Kartik
Oil Seeds: Til	Se Samum Indicum	Asarh	Kartik-Aghan
Fibres: San	Crotolaria Juncea	Asarh	Bhadon-Kaur
Patsan	Habicus Caannabinus	Asarh	Kaur-kartik
(B) <i>Rabi</i> Gojai (Mixed Barley and Wheat)	Barely: Hordeun Vulgare Wheat: Triticum Sativun	Kartik	End of Phagun-Chait
Mahobia	Gram	Kartik	Phagun-Chait
Rai, Sarson	Repeseed: Brassnasp	Kaur	Phagun
Tisi (varieties)	Lineseed: Linun Ustatissimum	Kaur-Kartik	Magh-Phagun-Chait
(C) <i>Kharif and Rabi</i> Arhar	Cytisus Cajan	Asarh	Magh and Chait
Sugarcane (Several varieties)		Planted in Chait	After a complete fasli year, cut the following Kartik

(Source: On the Basis of Imperial Gazetteer of India)

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